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Migration and Trust: Evidence on Assimilation from Internal Migrants

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Abstract

I study whether internal migrants' generalized trust adjusts to their destination environment, using Swiss Household Panel data that track the same individuals before and after they move between cantons. An event-study difference-in-differences design compares movers with migrants who have not yet moved. I estimate trust increases of 0.14 standard deviations for moves to cantons with higher trust than the origin and decreases of 0.10 for moves to lower-trust cantons. Changes emerge within the first few years. Complementary estimates remain positive after accounting for measured destination trustworthiness. These findings suggest that generalized trust can adjust relatively quickly following migration.

JEL: O10, J01, J15, R23, A13, D19

Keywords: Trust, Assimilation, Migration, Switzerland

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I. Introduction

Differences in expectations and social norms may create frictions between newcomers and incumbents in many settings, including workplaces and local communities. In the context of migration, these frictions may be exacerbated by media and political claims that immigrants pose a cultural threat because they are unable or unwilling to assimilate (Alesina and Tabellini, 2024). Similar frictions may also arise in internal migration, since cultural differences do not necessarily coincide with national borders.¹ Cultural traits can vary substantially within a single country (Obradovich et al., 2022; Tabellini, 2010), making internal migration an informative setting for studying cultural assimilation. Previous research has exploited this variation to study assimilation in Germany (Alesina and Fuchs-Schündeln, 2007), Italy (Ichino and Maggi, 2000), and the United States (Cantoni and Pons, 2022).

This paper studies whether internal migrants assimilate to the culture of their new location, with *assimilation* being defined as the process of becoming similar to others by taking in and using their customs and culture (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, 2024).² Studying this topic is conceptually challenging because migrants face a trade-off. On one hand, they may pursue assimilation as a means of integrating into the labor market (Abramitzky et al., 2020) or conforming to the prevailing social norms (Bernheim, 1994). On the other hand, they may not want to assimilate because the social and psychological costs related to a loss of identity are too high (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000; Bisin and Verdier, 2000; Olcina et al., 2024).³ Understanding which of these opposing forces dominate is an empirical question and motivates this paper.

The challenge in answering this empirical question lies in disentangling assimilation

¹The scramble for Africa represents an extreme example (Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2016).

²Guiso et al. (2006) defines culture as “those customary beliefs and values that ethnic, religious, and social groups transmit fairly unchanged from generation to generation.”

³For instance, in a high trusting place, people may find it awkward and exclude others if they lock their office door when they leave, approach strangers with suspicion, or are too cautious about sharing information about their personal lives. But at the same time people may incur high psychological costs for behaving differently, as they may be culturally conditioned to be careful with strangers and may feel uneasy if they behave less carefully. Furthermore, Butler et al. (2016) argue that different places have a different “right amount of trust” that results from balancing the trade-off between a high exposure to being cheated and a risk of losing opportunities for (economic or social) gains. From this point of view, internalizing the right amount of trust is economically profitable in either direction. This assimilation is especially important given that people use heuristics or imitate others when information is imperfect or costly to obtain (Boyd and Richerson, 1995, 1988).

from the sorting of migrants to places; that is, migrants may move and settle in a specific location *because* the people who live there share the same cultural traits (see, for instance, [Anelli et al., 2023](#); [Michaeli et al., 2023](#)). Disentangling assimilation from sorting requires a counterfactual of how the migrants’ cultural traits would have evolved had they not migrated. Note, however, that non-migrants do not serve as a good counterfactual because they likely differ from the migrants in many ways. For instance, they might differ in their risk aversion, open-mindedness, patience, and other characteristics. Furthermore, measuring the extent of assimilation (i.e., how similar migrants become to locals) also requires data on the migrants’ cultural traits before migration. Such data are typically not available.

I deal with this empirical challenge by studying assimilation of internal migrants within Switzerland. This context offers an ideal setting for two main reasons. First, Switzerland consists of 26 highly autonomous cantons⁴ that, for historical reasons, have evolved with substantial institutional differences that mirror cultural differences ([Rustagi, 2024](#)).⁵ These differences resemble international differences in Europe (e.g., the lowest trust canton is similar to Spain while the highest trust canton is similar to Denmark). Thus, in my analysis, I exploit the cultural variation at the cantonal level to study how it affects migrants’ cultural traits.

Second, the Swiss Household Panel (SHP) provides annual longitudinal data and continues interviewing respondents when they move. I use 17 years of data, from 2002 to 2018, which allows me to observe the same internal migrants and their trust before and after migration and to compare migrants who move at different times in a difference-in-differences framework. To the best of my knowledge, this is the longest panel eliciting the generalized trust question.

To assess assimilation, I focus on generalized trust in others, one of the most extensively studied cultural traits in economics ([Alesina and Giuliano, 2015](#); [Grosjean, 2011](#)).⁶ Generalized trust has also been used as an indicator of the cooperative dimen-

⁴The cantons are the Swiss administrative areas and are equivalent to provinces or states.

⁵Evidence of this pattern is the outcomes from multiple referenda on diverse topics such as restricting mass immigration (2014), joining the Schengen Area (2005), and legalizing same-sex partnerships (2005).

⁶Other papers studying cultural assimilation have focused on behavior like naming patterns, intermarrying and family choices, learning the language, and friendships ([Gathmann and Garbers, 2023](#); [Abramitzky et al.,](#)

sion of culture, or civic capital, encompassing the shared beliefs and values that support socially beneficial cooperation (Guiso et al., 2011). As a cultural trait, generalized trust is also important in and of itself because it affects growth and other desirable economic, social, and political outcomes (Guiso et al., 2015; Algan and Cahuc, 2014; Nunn and Wantchekon, 2011; Algan and Cahuc, 2010; Knack and Keefer, 1997; Putnam, 1993).

Generalized trust refers to an individual’s willingness to accept vulnerability based on an expectation that others will cooperate, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control them (Johnson and Mislin, 2011; Gambetta, 2000; Rousseau et al., 1998; Mayer et al., 1995).⁷ Trustworthiness, by contrast, concerns whether others behave in ways that justify being trusted. Responses to the generalized trust question may reflect both a willingness to trust and beliefs about others’ trustworthiness (Sapienza et al., 2013; Thöni et al., 2012).⁸ Beliefs about others’ behavior may influence an individual’s own willingness to cooperate through reciprocity (Fehr et al., 2002). The distinction between trust and trustworthiness nevertheless yields a useful empirical test. If destination-canton trust merely proxies for local norms of trustworthiness, its estimated relationship with migrants’ trust should weaken once destination-canton trustworthiness is accounted for. I therefore study the two canton-level measures jointly. Although this exercise cannot fully distinguish changes in migrants’ beliefs from changes in their preferences, it allows me to assess whether assimilation to destination trust persists independently of measured local trustworthiness.

My analysis relies on two main strategies. First, I estimate event studies separately for migrants moving to higher- and lower-trust cantons, using not-yet-moved migrants as the comparison group (Callaway and Sant’Anna, 2021). This approach traces trust before and after migration, allowing me to assess pre-move trends, anticipatory changes, and post-move adaptation. As an additional check on the comparability of the migration cohorts, I show that early and later movers have similar observed demographic

2020; Facchini et al., 2015; Bleakley and Chin, 2010; Meng and Gregory, 2005), but arguably, trust measures a more internal, psychological process.

⁷This definition implies that an individual is trusting whenever they accept vulnerability, even when they believe the other party to be highly trustworthy, because some risk remains.

⁸See the Supplemental Appendix for a discussion of the generalized trust measure and its relationship with experimental measures. An early study by Glaeser et al. (2000) found that generalized trust was more strongly correlated with trustworthiness than with trusting behavior in the trust game.

characteristics before migration.

In the second strategy, I combine all migrants in a two-period fixed-effects specification with a continuous treatment intensity (see [Callaway et al., forthcoming](#)). This allows me to use continuous variation in trust across destination cantons rather than only the direction of migration. Individual fixed effects absorb time-invariant characteristics, while adjusted specifications allow trust changes to vary with education and log personal income measured in the last observed pre-move period. I also describe migrants' characteristics before and after moving, grouping them by origin-canton trust before migration and destination-canton trust afterward.

Using the event-study approach, I find that migrants moving to higher-trust cantons increase their trust by 0.14 standard deviations, whereas migrants moving to lower-trust cantons decrease their trust by 0.10 standard deviations. These responses become visible within the first few years after migration. In the collapsed continuous-treatment specification, each migrant's observations are summarized by separate average trust levels before and after migration. A one-point higher level of destination-canton trust on the original 0–10 scale is associated with a 0.49-point larger pre-to-post change in migrants' trust. This estimate remains similar when the specification allows trust changes to vary with education and log personal income measured before migration.

Because generalized trust may partly reflect beliefs about whether other people are trustworthy, I also examine whether destination-canton trust is merely capturing local norms of trustworthiness. I include separate interactions of the post-move indicator with destination-canton trust and destination-canton trustworthiness. The coefficient on trust becomes slightly larger rather than smaller, whereas the coefficient on trustworthiness is small and statistically insignificant. This suggests that the main relationship is not simply capturing broader canton-level trustworthiness.

The results are robust to placebo tests using non-movers, measuring canton trust before the migrations in the sample, and using trust in the federal government as an alternative outcome. I find no systematic migration-related change in income, while changes in income and education are broadly comparable to those among age- and year-matched non-movers. Event studies for religious attendance and political orientation

also provide little evidence of convergence toward destination-canton norms, suggesting that the trust results do not reflect a general tendency for all attitudes and behaviors to change after migration.

Finally, I explore heterogeneity using the sorted partial effects method ([Chernozhukov et al., 2018](#)). Approximately 70% of the estimated conditional effects are above zero, although the wide confidence bands indicate substantial uncertainty. Comparing the 20% of migrants with the largest predicted effects with the 20% with the smallest, I find that the largest-effect group has lower pre-move income and comes from origin cantons with higher average trust and trustworthiness. This group is also more likely to be female and younger, but the differences in gender and age are not statistically significant.

This paper makes three main contributions. First, it studies cultural assimilation as a within-person change among people who themselves migrate, rather than among their descendants. Most research on assimilation in trust examines second- or later-generation immigrants ([Giavazzi et al., 2019](#); [Ljunge, 2014](#); [Moschion and Tabasso, 2014](#)).⁹ Because these descendants were born and raised in the destination country, such studies identify the relative influence of parental culture and the environment in which they grew up, rather than changes experienced by migrants after moving. Studies of first-generation migrants generally do not observe the same individuals before they arrive at their destination ([Jaschke et al., 2022](#); [Marino Fages and Morales Cerda, 2022](#); [Cameron et al., 2015](#)). Without pre-migration observations, it is impossible to determine whether similarity to the destination reflects adaptation or the selection of people who already held similar attitudes. It is also impossible to measure the magnitude and timing of within-person change. By following the same internal migrants before and after they move, I can account for their pre-migration trust and use variation in migration timing to study whether, when, and in which direction their trust changes.

Second, the paper contributes to the debate over the persistence and malleability of culture. Previous research shows that trust and related cultural traits can persist across

⁹See also [Fernández and Fogli \(2006\)](#), [Fernandez \(2007\)](#), and [Giuliano \(2007\)](#). These studies commonly treat descendants' locations as plausibly exogenous because the location decision was made by their parents.

generations ([Algan and Cahuc, 2010](#); [Nunn and Wantchekon, 2011](#); [Guiso et al., 2016](#); [Michalopoulos and Xue, 2021](#); [Drelichman et al., 2021](#); [Nikolova et al., 2022](#); [Tur-Prats and Valencia Caicedo, 2025](#)). Even when adaptation occurs, it may be slow: [Alesina and Fuchs-Schündeln \(2007\)](#) estimate that preferences for state intervention in East and West Germany would take one to two generations to converge completely, while [Atkin \(2016\)](#) shows that internal migrants in India retain origin-state food preferences despite their economic costs. Similarly, in my own data, I find little evidence that religious attendance or political orientation converges toward destination-canton averages over the observed post-move period. Generalized trust, by contrast, begins to adjust within the first few years after migration. This pattern is consistent with theories emphasizing social influence and contact between communities as forces of cultural change ([Desmet and Wacziarg, 2021](#); [Kuran and Sandholm, 2008](#)). Moreover, the relationship with destination-canton trust is not attenuated when destination-canton trustworthiness is included jointly, indicating that it is not simply proxying for measured local norms of trustworthiness.

Third, my findings suggest a possible mechanism behind the workplace peer effects documented by [Ichino and Maggi \(2000\)](#). Ichino and Maggi show that regional differences in absenteeism and misconduct within a large Italian bank are explained partly by workers’ interactions with their colleagues. My results suggest that adaptation in generalized trust may be one channel through which the workplace environment affects such behavior. Exposure to colleagues with different social norms may alter workers’ expectations about the reliability of others and the returns to cooperation, which could in turn influence shirking. This interpretation remains suggestive, as the data do not allow me to test this mechanism directly.

The paper is organized as follows. Section II describes the field setting and data. Section III presents the empirical strategy. Sections IV and V present the event-study and continuous-treatment results, respectively. Section VI examines assimilation in other outcomes. Section VII presents the heterogeneity analysis, and Section VIII concludes.

II. Field Setting and Data

Switzerland is a federal republic founded in 1848 and composed of 26 cantons that keep strong autonomy from the central government. The country has a system of direct democracy where people’s initiatives and referendums at the federal, cantonal and municipal levels give citizens the chance to influence the institutions. In particular, the cantons have the powers related to their identity—such as culture, religion, language and public health and cross border cooperation.¹⁰ Furthermore, the number of referenda per year and the difficulty of proposing a popular initiative also varies between cantons (Rustagi, 2024; Frey and Schaltegger, 2021; Bühlmann et al., 2014; Barankay et al., 2003). These referendums generate institutional variation between cantons that accumulate over the years.

Despite its small physical space, Switzerland presents significant cultural diversity. It has four official languages (German, French, Italian and Romansh) and two main religions (Roman Catholic and Protestant). The cultural diversity is also driven by the differences in institutions (Alesina and Giuliano, 2015). In particular, Rustagi (2024) exploits a natural experiment in the middle ages that affected institutions to show that this shock had a long lasting effects on the cantons’ culture.

On top of these differences, Switzerland has one of the highest shares of international immigrants among the western countries (according to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, 30.5% of the population were immigrants in 2019) and a significant internal mobility (6% internal movers in 2019). Combined with the differences between the cantons in terms of culture and institutions, this makes Switzerland a particularly interesting setup for answering my research question, that is, do migrants assimilate their trust level to the local average when they move places?

¹⁰The federal state is responsible for monetary policy, foreign affairs, social security, customs and justice; and municipalities control mostly public service delivery -such as electricity, water and gas provision. Citizenship, education and taxes are split in the three levels (see <https://www.wolf-linder.ch/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Swiss-political-system.pdf>). In some municipalities, even the citizenship is only granted after a vote by the locals (Hainmueller and Hangartner, 2013).

A. Measuring trust

Since the work of [La Porta et al. \(1997\)](#) and [Zak and Knack \(2001\)](#), the generalized trust question has become the standard measure of trust (see [Nunn and Wantchekon, 2011](#); [Algan and Cahuc, 2010](#)), which is found in many surveys such as the World Values Survey (WVS) or the European Social Survey (ESS).^{11 12} The exact wording is as follows: “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?” and respondents can answer from 0 to 10 where 0 means “Can’t be too careful” and 10 means “Most people can be trusted”.¹³ A relevant question is who are these “most people”. [Sturgis and Smith \(2010\)](#) shows that, when answering the question, 35% of respondents in Britain think of unknown others and only 2% think of people in the local area. This is important because one might worry that respondents are just considering a different set of “most people” when they migrate. If this was the case, the ingroup bias found in Switzerland by [Falk and Zehnder \(2013\)](#) would predict a lower trust from migrants moving in either direction.

B. Data

I use data from the Swiss Household Panel (SHP) ([SHP Group, 2021](#)). This is a survey conducted yearly in Switzerland and is representative of the Swiss population aged 14 and over with respect to major demographic variables. Importantly, the survey tracks respondents when they move to different locations. Furthermore, in 2002 they introduced the generalized trust question, and hence this is our starting period. Between 2002 and 2018, a total of 31,773 individuals (in 12,842 households) were surveyed by computer-assisted telephone interviews. Of these individuals, 3.84% of the Swiss citizens move within Switzerland, 6.84% returned from living abroad and 13.45% are not Swiss citizens.¹⁴

¹¹This measure is attributed to Rosenberg, see [Sturgis and Smith \(2010\)](#).

¹²The experimental literature has shown that generalized trust captures expected trustworthiness (beliefs) and preferences for cooperation in studies with real stakes ([Thöni et al., 2012](#); [Sapienza et al., 2013](#)) (I discuss the findings of this literature in the Online Appendix).

¹³See [Murtin et al. \(2018\)](#) and [Alesina and La Ferrara \(2002\)](#) for reviews of its determinants.

¹⁴It is worth noting that only a small fraction (2%) of them acquire Swiss citizenship, and thus, almost all the internal movers are likely to have been born in Switzerland (see <https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/naturalisation--no-thanks-why-some-residents-choose-not-to-become-swiss/35624994>).

The SHP provides a unique opportunity for my study for three reasons.¹⁵ First, the SHP is, to the best of my knowledge, the longest panel asking the generalized trust question in the world. Second, the SHP contains a comparatively large number of migrants. Third, even when different parts of the country speak different languages, the migrants are interviewed in the same language before and after moving, which eliminates language effects.

In the next subsections, I document substantial variation in average trust across cantons, describe the migration patterns and the main characteristics of the migrants, and finally present some initial evidence of the effect the host canton has on the migrant’s trust level.

C. Trust in the cantons

The treatment I analyze in this paper is the effect of moving to a canton with a different average trust level from the canton of origin. I standardize individual trust responses across valid person-wave observations before constructing the canton averages. Consequently, individual trust and average canton trust are expressed on the same individual-level standard-deviation scale. I use the same standard deviation of individual person-wave trust responses, approximately 2.25 points, to express the aggregate event-study effects in standardized units. Throughout the analysis, I calculate canton-level averages using respondents whose first nationality is recorded as Swiss and who make no observed inter-cantonal moves during the sample period (2002-2018). Figure 1 and the map in Figure 2 show substantial variation in trust across cantons, including within language regions.

To put it into perspective, the lowest-trust cantons have trust levels comparable to several lower-to-middle trust Western European countries, such as Italy and Spain, while the highest-trust cantons are similar to the highest-trust countries in Europe,

¹⁵The WVS, ESS and the General Social Survey (GSS) are repeated cross sections; and the Global Preferences Survey (GPS) is only one cross section, and hence, they only observe migrants after they have moved, and only once. Other panel datasets are the German Socio Economic Panel (GSOEP), but it asks the trust question in some waves only and the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS) but only asks the trust question in the first wave.

such as Denmark and Norway (European Social Survey, 2012).¹⁶

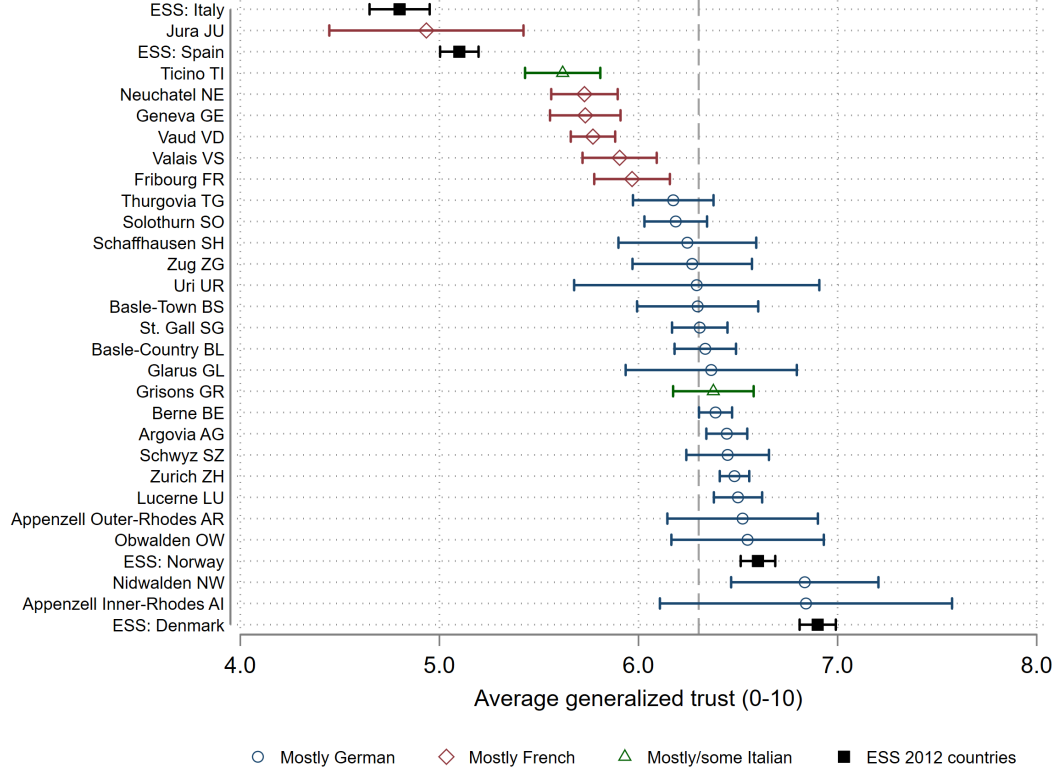


Figure 1 : Trust in the cantons

Note: The figure presents average generalized trust among Swiss-national non-movers in each canton, calculated by pooling valid responses over 2002–2018. Individual responses range from 0 to 10. The spikes for the cantons show 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered at the individual level. The vertical dashed line shows the median of the 26 canton means. Blue circles refer to mostly German-speaking cantons, red diamonds to mostly French-speaking cantons, and green triangles to cantons with Italian-speaking regions. Black squares show country averages for Spain, Italy, Denmark, and Norway from the European Social Survey (2012). The country confidence intervals are approximate 95% intervals calculated from the reported response distributions and sample sizes.

D. Internal migrants

I define internal migrants as Swiss nationals who moved from one canton to another between 2002 and 2018. Swiss nationality is identified using the SHP's first-nationality

¹⁶For this comparison, I use wave 6 of the European Social Survey, which uses the same question in different countries. See [here](#) for an interactive online tool to explore other countries.

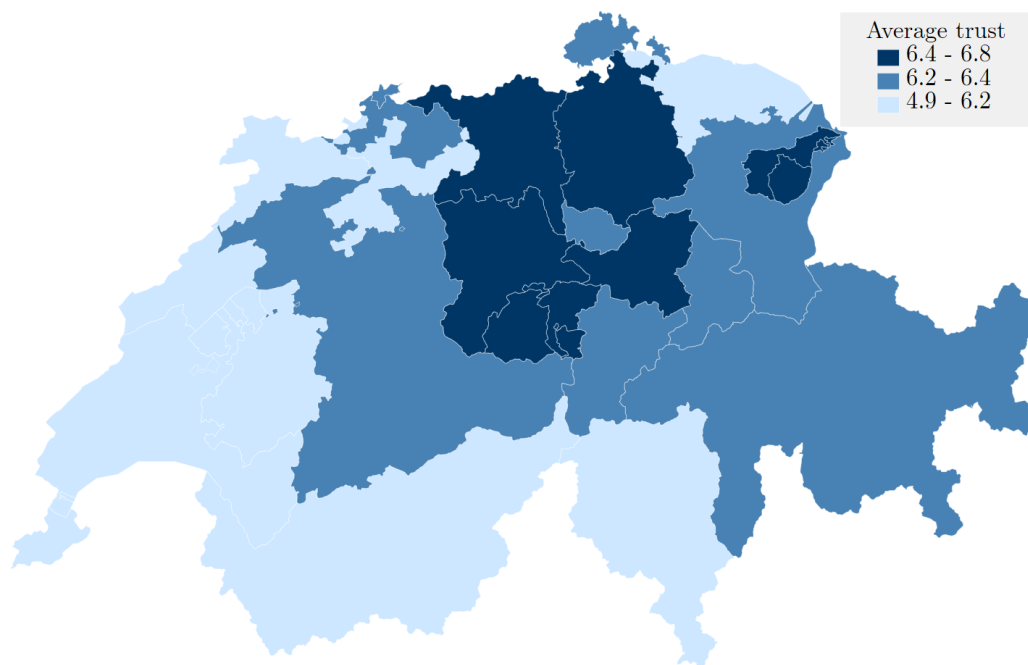


Figure 2 : Trust in the cantons

Note: The map presents average trust among Swiss-national non-movers in each canton over the period 2002–2018, grouped into three terciles. Individual trust responses range from 0 to 10. White lines represent the canton borders.

variable.¹⁷ In practice, I identify them as migrants when the residence changes across survey waves. In order to have a cleaner comparison group and since the assimilation might take time to take place, I focus on internal migrants who moved only once (this accounts for 71.5% of the migrants in the sample). Note that people who move within the canton are not considered migrants for our purposes because I am interested in the effect of the change in the cultural context, which varies mainly at the canton level. Internal migrants represent roughly 0.81% of the full sample each year. Figure OA.1 shows the distribution in the sample. To assess whether migration decisions appear to be directly related to the cultural environment, Figure OA.3 reports the first stated reason for moving. The most common reasons are personal, family, work, and housing-related motives, while reasons related to the local environment or local institutions

¹⁷The canton of origin is the canton in which the respondent is observed in the last wave before the inter-cantonal move, and the destination is the canton observed after the move. Respondents who enter the panel after 2002 are eligible provided they satisfy the relevant sample requirements.

are rare. This suggests that internal migration in the sample is primarily driven by standard life-cycle and household considerations rather than by an explicit search for places with different trust levels. Appendix Table OA.8 describes how future one-time internal migrants differ from Swiss non-movers at their first eligible panel observation. Future migrants are younger, less likely to be married, live in slightly smaller households, and have somewhat higher education. Average personal income and individual trust are similar across the two groups. Appendix Table OA.9 further shows that average changes in education and log income around migration are modest and broadly comparable to those observed among non-migrants in the same calendar-year-by-age cells.

In order to understand the migration patterns of internal migrants, I divide the cantons at the median level of trust (see Figure 1). Table 1 shows the flows of migrants from the cantons below (low) and above (high) the median level of trust. Migrants from low-trust cantons are equally split in both groups (48.7% moving to other low-trust cantons and 51.30% moving to high-trust cantons) but migrants moving from high-trust cantons tend to go more to other high-trust cantons (34.60% and 65.4%). Appendix Figure OA.2 provides a canton-level view of migration flows for the migrants in the baseline estimation sample.

Table 1—: Migration flows of internal migrants by canton trust level

		Trust in Destination		
		Low	High	Total
Trust in Origin	Low	48.7%	51.3%	100%
	High	34.6%	65.4%	100%
Total		40.1%	59.9%	100%

Note: The table reports the transition matrix between origin and destination cantons classified as low or high trust. The sample consists of Swiss nationals with exactly one observed inter-cantonal move during the sample period.

Since I am interested in the sign of the difference between the average trust at destination and average trust at the origin, I compute the percentage of people moving to a higher/lower trust canton. Table 2 shows that 44.65% of the migrants move to a lower trust canton and 55.35% move to a higher trust canton. The average size of the

trust gap is similar in both groups. The last column reports average trust in migrants' origin cantons, with each migrant receiving equal weight. Canton trust is measured on the original 0–10 scale by pooling valid trust responses from Swiss-national non-movers over 2002–2018.

Table 2—: Direction of the move and gap between the trust levels at origin and destination

		Percentage	Trust gap between origin and destination	Origin-canton trust
Moving to	lower trust canton	44.65%	-0.22 (0.24)	6.39
	higher trust canton	55.35%	0.22 (0.23)	6.09
Total		100%	0.022 (0.32)	

Note: The table reports the percentage of migrants moving to higher- or lower-trust cantons and the mean trust gap, defined as destination-canton trust minus origin-canton trust, with standard deviations in parentheses. Canton trust is measured on the original 0–10 scale by pooling valid trust responses from Swiss-national non-movers over 2002–2018. The last column reports mean origin-canton trust within each group, giving each migrant equal weight. The sample is restricted to Swiss-national one-time internal migrants aged 15 or older with at least three panel observations before and at least three after moving.

Online Appendix Figure [OA.21](#) shows similar shares of migrants contributing at least a given number of valid trust responses across the two migration directions. Appendix Table [OA.15](#) examines whether destination-canton trust is associated with the pre-to-post change in the probability of a missing trust response, conditional on origin-canton trust. Missing responses include both absence from the panel and missing trust answers within available records. The estimated association with destination-canton trust is 0.010 (s.e. 0.131; $p = 0.939$), providing no statistically significant evidence of such a relationship. Missing responses do not necessarily indicate permanent dropout: among migrants who miss at least one valid trust-response wave after their first valid response, 62.7 percent later return with another valid trust response.

I further examine whether post-move changes in the probability of absence from the panel vary with migrants' pre-move characteristics. Appendix Table [OA.16](#) reports separate linear probability models for migrants moving to lower- and higher-trust cantons, using potential observations within seven years before and after migration. The regressions interact post-move status with characteristics measured in the last observed pre-

move wave and include individual, calendar-year, and event-period fixed effects. After adjusting for multiple testing using the Holm procedure (Holm, 1979), the interactions with baseline trust, education, log personal income, and gender are not statistically significant in either group. The interaction with age is negative and significant among higher-trust movers (Holm-adjusted $p = 0.022$), while the interaction with marital status is negative and marginally significant among lower-trust movers (Holm-adjusted $p = 0.066$). These findings indicate some differences in post-move panel participation associated with age and marital status.

Figure 3 shows the shares of internal migrants by canton of origin (left panel) and destination (right panel). These shares vary substantially across cantons in both panels.

(a) Share of migrants from each origin (b) Share of migrants in each destination

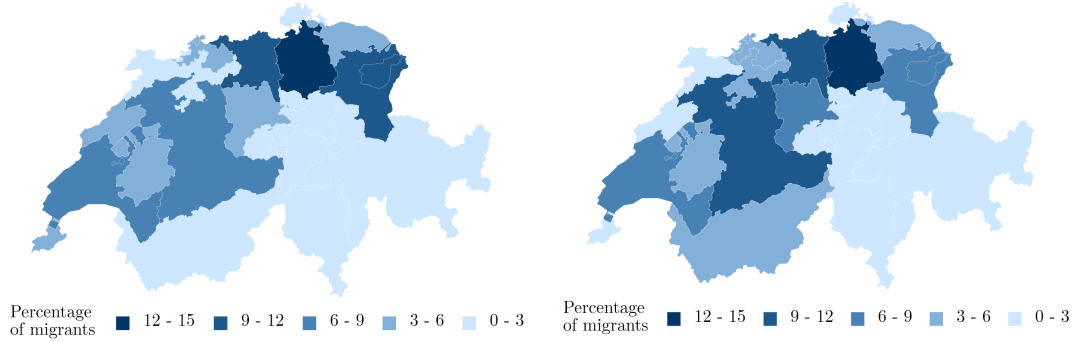


Figure 3 : Canton of origin/destination of all migrants

Note: The left map presents the percentage of all internal migrants coming from each canton. The right map presents the percentage of all internal migrants in each destination canton. White lines represent the canton borders.

E. Descriptive Evidence

Marino Fages and Morales Cerda (2022) show that international migrants' trust correlate strongly with the average trust level in the host country but only after they have migrated (i.e., after being exposed and immersed in the country). Figure 4 shows similar evidence, each panel plots a binscatter of migrant's trust and average trust in the destination canton (in order to account for sorting effects, I control for canton of origin

fixed effects)(see Figure OA.4 in the Online Appendix for a non-parametric version of the binscatter plots). For this, I collapse all trust responses of each migrant by regressing the reported trust on calendar year dummies and take the average of the residuals before and after migration by individual. Panel a shows the correlation for internal migrants after migration (controlling for the canton of origin) and Panel b shows the correlation for internal migrants before migration (controlling for the canton of origin). To minimize sorting effects, I restrict the sample to migrants who move between German cantons. The pattern is clear, migrant’s trust is highly correlated with the level of trust in the destination and there is no evidence of a positive correlation before the migration occurs. Table OA.7 in the Online Appendix reports complementary descriptive regressions with additional covariates for both internal and international migrants. The pattern, however, cannot be interpreted as causal because it does not distinguish between sorting and assimilation. This is my task in the next section.

III. Empirical Strategy

I study how migrants’ generalized trust changes after relocation to cantons with higher or lower average trust than their canton of origin. The main difficulty is disentangling assimilation from sorting effects, i.e., migrants moving to specific locations *because* these locations have certain characteristics such as a certain trust level. This is challenging because typically there is no pre-migration data on migrants. To overcome this, I exploit the longitudinal feature of the SHP in two different ways. First, I estimate event studies separately for moves to higher- and lower-trust cantons, comparing migrants who have already moved with those who have not yet moved. Second, I estimate a two-period fixed-effects specification relating migrants’ pre-to-post changes in trust to average trust in their destination canton.

Following a standard approach in difference-in-differences for staggered treatment adoption, I estimate the treatment effects by comparing early movers with late movers Callaway and Sant’Anna (2021). Using the potential outcomes notation, Callaway and Sant’Anna (2021) define the group-time average treatment effect as

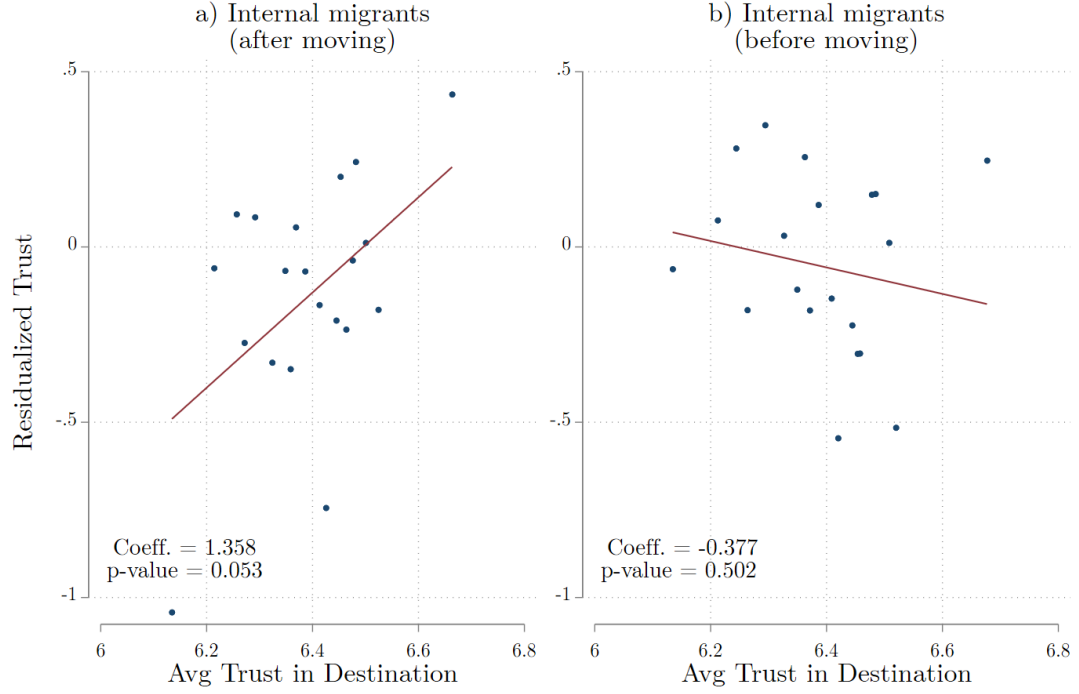


Figure 4 : Correlation between Residualized Trust and Average Trust in the destination canton

Note: The figure presents binscatter plots of migrant's Residualized Trust and Average Trust in the destination canton (controlling for canton of origin) for internal migrants in German cantons after moving (left) and before moving (right). To compute the Residualized Trust, I first regress the Trust variable on calendar year dummies, and then average all the residuals by individual.

$$(1) \quad ATT(m, t) = \mathbb{E}[Y_t(m) - Y_t(0) | M_m = 1],$$

where m denotes the period in which a migrant first moves to another canton, M_m is an indicator equal to one for migrants who move in period m , and $Y_t(m)$ is the potential trust outcome in period t if the migrant moves in period m . In contrast, $Y_t(0)$ is the potential trust outcome that members of cohort m would have reported had they remained untreated through period t . Thus, $ATT(m, t)$ is the average effect of moving in period m for members of cohort m , evaluated in period t . Because this counterfactual outcome is not observed for migrants who have already moved, I use migrants who have

not yet moved by period t as the comparison group. Identification therefore requires that, in the absence of migration, the trust of cohort m and that of the not-yet-treated migrants would have followed parallel trends.

In order to use an event-study design, and prevent the effect from cancelling out, I split the sample based on whether migrants move to a higher or lower trust canton and run two separate regressions. This also works as a robustness check, since there is no mechanical reason to find that the effects mirror each other in both regressions (Cullen and Perez-Truglia, 2023). Another advantage of the methodology is that it allows me to control for time-constant covariates. I run an alternative specification controlling for the trust gap (i.e., the difference in average trust level in origin and destination canton).

Identification of the group-time effects requires five main conditions. First, treatment must be absorbing: once a migrant moves, the migrant remains treated throughout the remainder of the observation period. The restriction to one-time internal migrants ensures that respondents do not make another observed inter-cantonal move, including a return to the canton of origin. Second, the sampling process must permit the observations to be treated as draws from the population of interest. Third, migrants must not anticipate the effect of moving, so that future migration does not affect trust before the move. Fourth, there must be overlap: for every cohort and period for which an effect is estimated, suitable not-yet-treated migrants must be available as a comparison group. Finally, in the absence of migration, the untreated potential outcomes of cohort m must have followed the same average trend as those of the migrants who had not yet moved by time t .

I examine how assimilation evolves with time spent in the destination canton by aggregating the group-time ATTs by years relative to migration. At each event time, effects are averaged across migration cohorts, with weights proportional to the number of treated migrants contributing to each comparison.¹⁸ The reported post-move event-study average gives equal weight to event times zero through seven, including the year of migration.

¹⁸The event-time estimates may reflect compositional changes because the migration cohorts observed can vary across event times. I examine this issue in the Online Appendix.

The headline estimates use the simple aggregation, which pools all estimable post-move group-time effects with weights proportional to the number of treated migrants contributing to each comparison. Cohorts contributing more post-move comparisons therefore receive more total weight. This overall estimate is not restricted to the displayed event-time window. The Online Appendix also reports cohort and calendar-year aggregations. These aggregations follow [Callaway and Sant’Anna \(2021\)](#) and are implemented using the `csdid` command. For a more detailed explanation of how these measures are estimated, see [Marino Fages \(2023\)](#).

For inference, I report 95% pointwise confidence intervals for the event-time estimates, based on asymptotic standard errors clustered at the individual level. In the Online Appendix, I assess sensitivity to clustering at the canton of origin and at the canton of destination. Since the data contain some gaps, I interpolate missing trust observations using nearest-neighbor interpolation. In the Online Appendix, I assess robustness using no interpolation, forward interpolation, linear interpolation, and spline interpolation.

To complement the previous analysis, I combine all migrants in one regression. Following [Bertrand et al. \(2004\)](#), I collapse each migrant’s observations into one pre-move average and one post-move average and estimate a two-period fixed-effects specification with a continuous treatment intensity (see [Callaway et al., forthcoming](#); [Perez-Truglia, 2018](#); [Angrist and Imbens, 1995](#)). I do this for several reasons. First, it uses the continuous variation in trust across destination cantons rather than only the direction of the move. Second, it allows me to assess whether the estimates are robust to allowing changes in trust to vary with predetermined socioeconomic characteristics, and it simplifies the heterogeneity analysis. Third, averaging repeated trust measures reduces measurement error. Fourth, the specification provides a robustness check on the division of migrants into those moving to higher- and lower-trust cantons. Formally, I estimate

$$(2) \quad Trust_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 (Post_t \times AvgTrustDest_i) + \beta_2 Post_t + \epsilon_{it},$$

where $Trust_{it}$ is migrant i 's average residualized trust in the pre- or post-move period, $AvgTrustDest_i$ is average trust in the destination canton, and $Post_t$ is an indicator equal to one for the post-move period. Individual fixed effects are denoted by α_i , and ϵ_{it} is the individual-period-specific error term. In the adjusted specifications, I additionally include average age and interactions of $Post_t$ with education and log personal income measured in the last observed pre-move period, and average trustworthiness in the destination. These interactions allow the expected pre-to-post change in trust to vary with predetermined socioeconomic characteristics without conditioning on their post-move realizations.

With two observations per migrant, β_1 is the linear slope relating the migrant's pre-to-post change in trust to average trust in the destination canton. Under the strong parallel-trends assumption, β_1 can be interpreted as a regression-weighted average of the dose-specific average causal responses on the treated ([Callaway et al., forthcoming](#)).

Finally, I conduct four additional checks. The first two assess whether the findings could reflect features of the estimation procedure or changes in survey responses that extend beyond generalized trust. First, I implement a placebo analysis using non-migrants, assigning them a random moving year between 2003 and 2017, and find no systematic change in their trust. Second, I repeat the continuous-treatment analysis using trust in the federal government and find no corresponding assimilation. Third, to address concerns about the reflection problem—that migrants could simultaneously affect local residents' trust ([Manski, 1993](#))—I use canton trust measured in 2002, before any migration in the sample occurs, as the independent variable of interest. The results remain similar. Fourth, I assess sensitivity to selection into the complete pre- and post-move sample by comparing unweighted and inverse-probability-weighted continuous-treatment estimates on the same sample. Inclusion probabilities are estimated using observed pre-move characteristics, origin- and destination-canton trust, and migration year.

IV. Results: Event Study

As explained in the previous section, I split the sample into migrants who moved to higher- and lower-trust cantons relative to their cantons of origin. Panels (a) and (b) in Figure 5 present the event-study estimates, aggregated by years relative to migration, for the two subsamples (see Tables OA.1 and OA.4 in the Online Appendix for the underlying estimates). In both panels, the pre-move estimates are close to zero, providing no evidence against the parallel-trends assumption or of anticipation effects. Moving to a higher-trust canton has a positive effect on migrants' reported trust, whereas moving to a lower-trust canton has a negative effect. This mirrored pattern across two separate samples strengthens the interpretation that migrants' trust responds to the trust prevailing in the destination canton (Cullen and Perez-Truglia, 2023). The magnitude of the effects increases with time since migration, indicating that assimilation continues after the move.

To obtain a measure of the overall effect, I aggregate the post-move group-time ATTs into a single estimate. The overall effect is an increase of 0.14 standard deviations for migrants moving to higher-trust cantons ($p = 0.035$) and a decrease of 0.10 standard deviations for migrants moving to lower-trust cantons ($p = 0.059$).¹⁹ These estimates summarize effects across the observed post-move periods. Using the aggregation weights, the mean time since migration is approximately 3.9 years for moves to higher-trust cantons and 3.4 years for moves to lower-trust cantons.²⁰ On the original trust scale, these effects are substantial relative to the average origin–destination canton trust gaps reported in Table 2, which provide a descriptive benchmark for their magnitude.

To put these magnitudes into perspective, I use education, one of the most robust individual-level correlates of generalized trust (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002), as a

¹⁹On the original 0–10 trust scale, the aggregate ATTs are 0.323 and -0.223 points, respectively. I express these effects in standard-deviation units by dividing each unrounded ATT by 2.25435, the standard deviation of individual person-wave trust responses used in the initial normalization. The calculations are $0.32264/2.25435 \approx 0.143$ and $-0.22332/2.25435 \approx -0.099$, which round to 0.14 and -0.10 standard deviations.

²⁰Figure OA.6 in the Online Appendix presents a placebo test in which I assign random destination cantons and moving dates (2003–2017) to non-migrants. The estimates provide no evidence of systematic changes in trust around the assigned moving dates. Tables OA.2, OA.3, OA.5, and OA.6 show qualitatively similar patterns when effects are aggregated by migration cohort or calendar year. The Online Appendix also reports event-study estimates with standard errors clustered by canton of origin or destination, without interpolating missing trust responses, using alternative interpolation methods, and controlling for the trust gap between the origin and destination cantons. The patterns remain similar across these specifications.

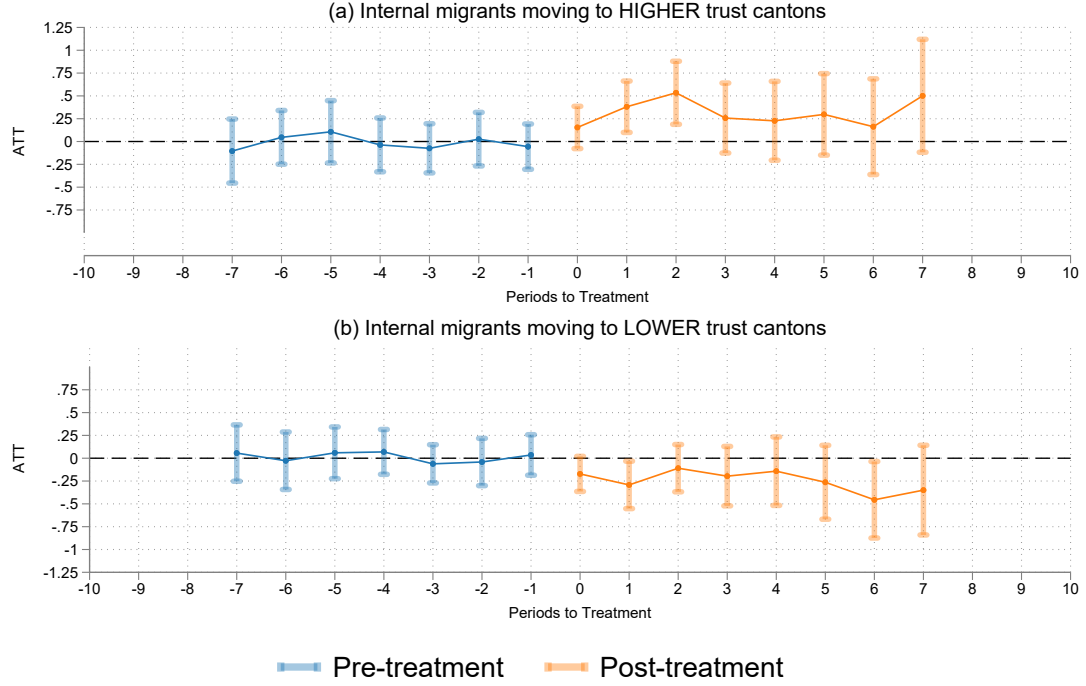


Figure 5 : Event study

Note: Panels (a) and (b) present event-study estimates of the effect of internal migration on generalized trust for migrants moving to cantons with higher and lower average trust than their canton of origin, respectively. Estimates are expressed in points on the original 0–10 trust scale. The spikes show 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered at the individual level. The horizontal dashed line marks zero effect. Missing trust observations are filled using nearest-neighbor interpolation. Results remain similar when standard errors are clustered by canton of origin or destination, when missing trust observations are not interpolated, when alternative interpolation methods are used (forward, linear, and spline), and when controlling for the trust gap between the cantons of origin and destination (see the Online Appendix). The analysis uses the Stata command `csdid` (Rios-Avila et al., 2021). Figure OA.20 shows the number of observations in each event-study period.

benchmark. Appendix Table OA.11 reports the association between education and trust among Swiss-national non-movers. Expressed in the original units, one additional year of education is associated with approximately 0.134 more trust points. The aggregate event-study effects of 0.323 and -0.223 trust points are therefore comparable in magnitude to the trust differences associated with approximately 2.4 additional years and 1.7 fewer years of education, respectively.

Appendix Table OA.12 provides complementary behavioral benchmarks. Using the same Swiss-national non-mover sample, higher trust is positively associated with political interest, participation in federal polls, association membership, donations, and

volunteering. Applying the estimated trust assimilation effect to these associations implies modest but consistently positive changes in civic and prosocial outcomes, such as higher association membership, charitable membership, donation, and voluntary work.

Either for migrants moving into higher or lower trust cantons, the jump appears already in the first year after migration. This is not surprising if we consider that trust has also a belief component, which is arguably easier to change than the preferences component. This is consistent with previous findings stating that the generalized trust measure captures beliefs about others' trustworthiness (Sapienza et al., 2013).

Because income may itself respond to migration and could be one mechanism linking migration to trust, I also examine its event-study dynamics in the Online Appendix. Figure OA.5 shows no systematic change in personal income around migration for either group. If anything, personal income moves in the opposite direction from trust at the time of migration among movers to higher-trust cantons.

A. Robustness

The event-study graphs provide no evidence against parallel trends: the pre-move estimates are not statistically distinguishable from zero for migrants moving to either higher- or lower-trust cantons. In Table 3, I check whether early and late migrants are also similar before migration in terms of observable characteristics. I define late migrants as those who migrate on or after the year 2011. The top (bottom) panel compares early and late migrants moving to higher (lower) trust cantons. None of the differences are economically nor statistically significant at the conventional levels, which reassures the validity of the counterfactual group.

V. Results: Difference-in-differences

Another standard approach is to collapse all the data in periods before and after the migration occurs and perform a standard difference-in-differences analysis with two periods and a continuous treatment. In particular, I follow Bertrand et al. (2004) and regress the trust variable on interview year dummies and take the average of the residuals as a new outcome variable. I do this separately for periods before and after

Table 3—: Early vs late migrants

	Early Movers		Late Movers		Coeff.	p-value
	N	Mean (s.d.)	N	Mean (s.d.)		
Moving to HIGHER trust canton						
Age	189	37.89 (15.07)	280	35.45 (17.16)	-2.445	0.10
Female	189	0.53 (0.50)	280	0.50 (0.50)	-0.038	0.42
Married	189	0.33 (0.46)	280	0.28 (0.43)	-0.050	0.23
Personal income (CHF)	158	51818.99 (35288.32)	233	47152.29 (51305.36)	-4,666.697	0.29
Education (years)	188	13.38 (2.84)	260	13.37 (3.07)	-0.009	0.97
HH Size	125	2.26 (1.32)	146	2.12 (1.08)	-0.144	0.33
Moving to LOWER trust canton						
Age	157	37.14 (16.13)	273	37.09 (15.96)	-0.053	0.97
Female	157	0.55 (0.50)	273	0.52 (0.50)	-0.037	0.46
Married	157	0.38 (0.47)	273	0.33 (0.45)	-0.053	0.25
Personal income (CHF)	124	52000.03 (33289.02)	223	49254.88 (33455.39)	-2,745.147	0.46
Education (years)	155	13.13 (2.75)	248	13.60 (3.24)	0.465	0.12
HH Size	93	2.26 (1.27)	153	2.27 (1.31)	0.012	0.94

Note: The table shows the number of observations, means, standard deviations, coefficients and p-values of regressing each variable on an indicator that takes the value 1 for late migrants and 0 for early migrants. Late migrants are migrants who moved on or after 2011. The top (bottom) of the table describes internal migrants moving to HIGHER (LOWER) trust cantons. Using a two-sided 5% test and 80% power, minimum detectable effects range from 0.26 to 0.35 standard deviations in the higher-trust panel and from 0.28 to 0.37 standard deviations in the lower-trust panel. Personal income is annual net personal income measured in Swiss francs.

migration. This approach has several advantages. First, I avoid splitting the sample and exploit the intensity of the treatment directly in the identification. Second, it allows me to examine whether the estimates are sensitive to allowing changes in trust to vary with predetermined socioeconomic characteristics. I focus on education and log personal income measured in the last observed pre-move period, two important

correlates of individual trust (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002). Third, it is easy to study and interpret heterogeneity. Finally, the method accounts for serial correlation and helps in reducing measurement error by taking averages of repeated measures of trust (I keep migrants with three or more observations before and after moving).

A. Balance tests

The pre-move event-study estimates provide no statistically significant evidence against parallel trends. To complement this evidence, Table 4 describes the observable characteristics of the Swiss-national one-time internal migrants used in this section. The top panel groups migrants by origin-canton trust before moving, while the bottom panel groups them by destination-canton trust after moving. High- and low-trust cantons are defined relative to the median across the 26 cantons.

Before moving, migrants from high- and low-trust origin cantons differ relatively little across most observed characteristics. Education is the only statistically significant difference at the 5% level: migrants from high-trust origins have approximately 0.75 fewer years of education ($p = 0.03$). After moving, none of the reported differences is statistically significant at the 5% level, although migrants in high-trust destinations have slightly smaller households ($p = 0.07$).

B. Results

Table 5 presents the results of the difference-in-differences regressions in Equation 2. Column 1 reports the specification without covariates, which I treat as the preferred specification. A one-point higher level of destination-canton trust on the original 0–10 scale is associated with a 0.49-point larger pre-to-post change in migrants’ trust.²¹ Column 2 controls for average age and allows the pre-to-post change in trust to vary with education and log personal income measured in the last observed pre-move period.

²¹A one-standard-deviation higher level of destination-canton trust, calculated across migrants in the estimation sample, is associated with a 0.063-standard-deviation larger pre-to-post change in individual trust. In the sample of 363 migrants in column 1, the standard deviation of destination-canton trust is 0.29 points on the original 0–10 scale, giving each migrant equal weight. The standard deviation used to normalize individual person-wave trust responses is 2.25 points. Using the unrounded coefficient, the standardized association is therefore $0.48925 \times 0.28925 / 2.25435 \approx 0.063$. Because individual trust and canton averages use the same normalization, the reported regression coefficient also has the raw-point interpretation used in the main text.

Table 4—: Characteristics of internal migrants by canton trust before and after moving

	Low Trust		High Trust		Coeff.	p-value
	N	Mean (s.d.)	N	Mean (s.d.)		
Before moving						
Age	147	38.21 (16.21)	216	37.02 (15.46)	-1.183	0.49
Female	147	0.54 (0.50)	216	0.56 (0.50)	0.023	0.67
Married	147	0.36 (0.46)	216	0.35 (0.45)	-0.007	0.89
Personal income (CHF)	145	50,422 (40,827)	207	48,838 (32,858)	-1,584	0.70
Education (years)	147	13.83 (3.28)	216	13.08 (2.91)	-0.751	0.03
HH Size	107	2.23 (1.08)	139	2.28 (1.16)	0.043	0.76
After moving						
Age	150	45.17 (15.30)	213	44.48 (16.65)	-0.688	0.68
Female	150	0.56 (0.50)	213	0.54 (0.50)	-0.015	0.77
Married	150	0.49 (0.47)	213	0.45 (0.46)	-0.037	0.46
Personal income (CHF)	143	67,443 (49,509)	205	62,956 (38,462)	-4,487	0.36
Education (years)	150	14.57 (3.13)	213	14.56 (2.95)	-0.011	0.97
HH Size	132	2.29 (0.99)	192	2.10 (0.81)	-0.192	0.07

Note: The sample comprises 363 Swiss-national one-time internal migrants with at least three panel observations at age 15 or older in each of the pre- and post-move periods and nonmissing trust averages in both periods. Each migrant contributes one observation to each panel. Characteristics are averaged over available Swiss-national observations in the pre- and post-move periods, respectively. Low and High Trust refer to canton trust below and above the median across the 26 cantons. The top panel classifies migrants by origin-canton trust; the bottom panel classifies them by destination-canton trust. Group membership can therefore change across panels. Canton trust is calculated by pooling valid trust responses from Swiss-national non-movers over 2002–2018. Reported sample sizes vary across characteristics because of missing responses. The coefficient reports the High minus Low difference, with p-values based on heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors. Using a two-sided 5% test and 80% power, minimum detectable effects range from 0.30 to 0.36 standard deviations before moving and from 0.29 to 0.33 standard deviations after moving. Personal income is annual net personal income measured in Swiss francs.

Specifically, these predetermined characteristics are interacted with the post-move indicator. The coefficient remains virtually unchanged at 0.51 points per one-point higher

level of destination-canton trust.²²

I also examine whether these estimates are sensitive to selection into the complete pre- and post-move sample. Appendix Table OA.17 compares unweighted and inverse-probability-weighted versions of the specifications in columns 1 and 2. Inclusion probabilities are estimated on 442 known movers with complete covariates and sufficient potential panel follow-up to meet the requirement of at least three panel observations before and after migration. All four comparisons use the same 352 migrants; 11 of the 363 migrants in the original unadjusted specification lack covariates required for the inclusion model. The destination-trust coefficient changes from 0.494 to 0.523 without additional controls and from 0.506 to 0.544 when controlling for pre-move log personal income and education and the change in average age. Both weighted estimates remain statistically significant at the 5% level, with standard errors based on 999 bootstrap replications that re-estimate the inclusion models and outcome regressions. Accounting for observed predictors of sample inclusion therefore leaves the continuous-treatment estimates similar.

Columns 3 and 4 examine whether the estimated relationship with destination-canton trust is instead capturing broader differences in local norms of trustworthiness. This distinction is important because generalized trust partly reflects beliefs about whether other people are trustworthy (Sapienza et al., 2013). Relatedly, Grimalda and Marino Fages (2026) find that regional trust predicts migrants' expectations of others' trustworthiness, even after conditioning on regional trustworthiness, consistent with migrants using locally observed trust as a signal of how trustworthy others are. In the present setting, I conduct a related comparison by including interactions of the post-move indicator with both average trust and average trustworthiness in the destination canton.²³

²²Table OA.13 in the Online Appendix reports the original specifications controlling for contemporaneous log personal income and education. The estimate remains positive and similar in magnitude, but I interpret this specification only as an additional robustness check because these covariates may themselves respond to migration. Relatedly, Appendix Table OA.9 shows that average changes in education and log personal income among migrants are modest and broadly comparable to those observed among non-migrants in the same calendar-year-by-age cells.

²³The trustworthiness index combines six questions about the justifiability of lying in one's own interest, cheating on a tax declaration, avoiding a public-transport fare, claiming benefits without entitlement, keeping found money, and failing to report damage to a parked vehicle. I reverse-code the items so that higher values indicate less tolerance of these behaviors, average them for person-wave observations with valid responses to all six items, and standardize the resulting index. Canton averages are then calculated by pooling Swiss-national

Including both canton-level interactions does not reduce the estimated coefficient on destination-canton trust. The coefficient increases from 0.49 in column 1 to 0.63 in column 3 without the predetermined controls, and from 0.51 in column 2 to 0.58 in column 4 when they are included. By contrast, the coefficient on destination-canton trustworthiness is negative and statistically insignificant in both specifications. The trust coefficient is less precisely estimated in column 4 but remains significant at the 10% level ($p = 0.062$). These results suggest that the positive relationship with destination-canton trust is not simply capturing differences in measured local norms concerning dishonest behavior.

non-movers observed in 2011, 2014, and 2017. The canton-level measure therefore excludes both pre- and post-move responses from migrants in the estimation sample. Online Appendix Figure [OA.19](#) presents the canton averages of the trustworthiness index and their 95% confidence intervals.

Table 5—: Difference-in-differences results

VARIABLES	(1) Trust	(2) Trust	(3) Trust	(4) Trust	(5) Trust	(6) Trust	(7) TrustFed	(8) TrustFed
Avg trust in canton X Post move	0.489 (0.204)	0.506 (0.211)	0.627 (0.297)	0.578 (0.308)				
Avg trustworthiness in canton X Post move			-0.176 (0.270)	-0.091 (0.280)				
Avg trust in canton (2002) X Post move					0.408 (0.152)	0.437 (0.159)		
Avg fed trust in canton X Post move							0.004 (0.442)	0.113 (0.440)
Post move	-0.005 (0.030)	-0.077 (0.362)	-0.004 (0.030)	-0.080 (0.364)	0.107 (0.046)	0.003 (0.354)	0.032 (0.034)	-0.148 (0.487)
Pre-move education X Post move		-0.003 (0.010)		-0.003 (0.010)		-0.003 (0.010)		0.021 (0.011)
Pre-move log personal income X Post move		0.001 (0.033)		0.001 (0.034)		0.004 (0.033)		-0.009 (0.045)
Individual FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	726	704	726	704	726	704	624	620
R-squared	0.890	0.889	0.890	0.889	0.891	0.890	0.873	0.874

Note: The table presents OLS estimates from Equation 2. For each outcome, I first residualize individual responses with respect to survey-year indicators and then calculate separate person-level means for the pre- and post-move periods. Individual trust and trust in the federal government are standardized across valid person-wave observations before residualization; the corresponding canton averages are expressed on the same standardized scale. The main regressor in columns 1–4 is the interaction between the post-move indicator and average trust in the destination canton, calculated by pooling valid trust responses from Swiss-national non-movers over 2002–2018. Columns 3 and 4 additionally include the interaction between the post-move indicator and average trustworthiness in the destination canton. Average canton trustworthiness is calculated among Swiss-national non-movers from a standardized index of six reverse-coded items observed in 2011, 2014, and 2017; higher values indicate greater trustworthiness. In columns 5 and 6, the post-move indicator is instead interacted with trust in the destination canton measured in 2002. Columns 7 and 8 replace individual trust in strangers and destination-canton trust with individual trust in the federal government and average trust in the federal government in the destination canton. Columns 2, 4, 6, and 8 include average age and interactions of the post-move indicator with education and log personal income measured in the last observed pre-move period. The coefficient on average age and the regression constants are not reported. All regressions include individual fixed effects. Standard errors, clustered at the individual level, are reported in parentheses. Log personal income is the natural logarithm of annual net personal income measured in Swiss francs.

A pervasive issue in the literature of endogenous social effects is that of the reflection problem that arises when one wants to infer whether the average behavior in some group influences the behavior of the individuals that are part of it (Manski, 1993). In this case, the migrants may also be affecting the locals' trust levels, making both variables move together. To explore this possibility, I compute the average trust in the cantons using responses from the year 2002 only (i.e., before any of the migrants in the sample have moved). The idea is that the trust level in a canton should not be affected by the migrants before they arrive.²⁴ Appendix Table OA.14 shows that canton-level trust measured using the full sample and using observations from 2002 only is strongly correlated ($r = 0.88$), suggesting that the 2002 measure captures persistent differences in trust across cantons. In columns 5 and 6, a one-point higher level of destination-canton trust measured in 2002 is associated with a 0.41- and 0.44-point larger pre-to-post change in migrants' trust, respectively. These estimates are similar to the main estimates and more precisely estimated.

Finally, I repeat the analysis using trust in the federal government (columns 7 and 8).²⁵ I find no evidence that migrants adapt their trust in the federal government: the estimates in columns 7 and 8 are small relative to their standard errors. While studying the long-run effect of the Habsburg Empire, Becker et al. (2016) find that it had a positive effect on institutional trust but not on interpersonal trust, highlighting the fact that these operate through different mechanisms. One possible interpretation of these results is that the views about the federal government are not affected as much as the generalized trust because it relates to others' *beliefs* as opposed to others' *behavior* and these political beliefs might be more difficult to be transmitted and learned.

VI. Assimilation in other outcomes

The main analysis focuses on generalized trust. More broadly, Marino Fages and Morales Cerda (2022) show that migrants' social preferences are systematically related to those prevailing in their host societies, raising the question of whether the response

²⁴Of course, they might have been affected by migrants who moved on or before 2002, which I cannot observe.

²⁵I show the variation of trust in the federal government in the Online Appendix.

documented here extends beyond generalized trust. I therefore examine religious attendance and political orientation as additional comparison outcomes, asking whether they converge toward the corresponding averages in the destination canton. Both are culturally salient dimensions of behavior and attitudes that may be influenced by the surrounding social environment. Religious participation varies with both individual and societal conditions (Ruiter and Van Tubergen, 2009), while political ideology reflects both relatively persistent predispositions and situational influences (Sears and Funk, 1999; Jost et al., 2009).

Online Appendix Figures OA.15 and OA.16 document the cross-canton variation in these outcomes. For each outcome, I repeat the event-study analysis after classifying migrants according to whether they move to a canton with higher or lower religious attendance, or to a more right- or left-leaning canton, relative to the canton of origin. Online Appendix Figures OA.17 and OA.18 present the corresponding estimates.

The aggregate post-move estimates reinforce the pattern shown in the event-study figures. For religious attendance, the estimated ATT is 0.030 (s.e. 0.024) for migrants moving to cantons with higher religious attendance and 0.023 (s.e. 0.021) for migrants moving to cantons with lower religious attendance. Neither is statistically significant. For political orientation, the corresponding estimates are -0.098 (s.e. 0.102) for migrants moving to more right-leaning cantons and 0.160 (s.e. 0.114) for migrants moving to more left-leaning cantons. Both point in the opposite direction from convergence and neither is statistically significant.

Taken together, these estimates provide little evidence of systematic convergence toward destination-canton norms in either outcome. They therefore do not indicate a general pattern in which all individual attitudes and behaviors move toward the destination-canton average following migration.

The absence of systematic convergence in self-reported political orientation contrasts with the behavioral responses documented by Perez-Truglia (2018) on campaign contributions and Cantoni and Pons (2022) on voter turnout and party affiliation. This difference suggests that geographic context may influence political participation and contributions without necessarily producing a corresponding change in underlying ide-

ological orientation.

VII. Heterogeneity

In previous sections, I showed that, on average, migrants' trust responds to the level of trust prevailing in the destination canton. This average relationship may nevertheless conceal meaningful variation across migrants. For instance, research on international migration shows that assimilation can depend on conditions and institutions in the receiving environment.²⁶ Against this background, I examine whether the response varies systematically with both individual and contextual characteristics. The individual characteristics include gender, age at migration, and education and log personal income measured before migration. The contextual characteristics include trustworthiness in the cantons of origin and destination, while average trust in the canton of origin is included as a control.

This analysis addresses three related questions. First, does the average response mask substantial variation across migrants? Second, is this variation associated with migrants' pre-move demographic and socioeconomic characteristics? Third, does it depend on the cultural characteristics of the origin and destination cantons? These questions are relevant because they indicate whether the average result is broadly shared or concentrated among particular groups. Associations with age and socioeconomic characteristics may also provide suggestive evidence about the conditions under which trust is more malleable, while associations with canton characteristics indicate whether adaptation depends on the environments migrants leave and enter. Although these patterns cannot by themselves establish specific mechanisms, they provide evidence about the scope and limits of the average result.

To examine these questions, I compute the sorted partial effects (SPEs) proposed by Chernozhukov et al. (2018).²⁷ The method estimates the model-implied conditional partial effect of average trust in the destination canton for each migrant and reports the

²⁶See, for example, Fouka (2019, 2020); Fouka et al. (2022); Gagliarducci and Tabellini (2025); Abramitzky et al. (2025). Although these studies examine mechanisms specific to international migration, they motivate the broader question of which individual and contextual characteristics facilitate adaptation.

²⁷I use the R package SortedEffects (Chen et al., 2020).

quantiles of these effects, indexed by $u \in [0, 1]$. I refer to the mean of the conditional partial effects as the average partial effect (APE).

To implement the sorted-effects procedure using the individual as the sampling unit, I collapse the panel into one observation per migrant. The dependent variable is the difference between the migrant's average post-move and pre-move residualized trust. I estimate

$$(3) \quad \begin{aligned} \Delta Trust_i = & \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 AvgTrustDest_i + \gamma_2 AvgTrustOrig_i + \gamma'_3 Z_i \\ & + \gamma'_4 (AvgTrustDest_i \times Z_i) + \gamma_5 YearsBetweenMeans_i + \mu_i, \end{aligned}$$

where $AvgTrustDest_i$ and $AvgTrustOrig_i$ denote average trust in migrant i 's destination and origin cantons. The vector Z_i includes gender, age at migration, education and log personal income measured before migration, and average trustworthiness in the cantons of origin and destination. Age, education, and log personal income are mean-centered. The canton-level trustworthiness measures are constructed from the unstandardized 0–10 index and are mean-centered before inclusion in the regression. $YearsBetweenMeans_i$ is the mean interview year in the post-move period minus the mean interview year in the pre-move period. It accounts for differences across migrants in the time separating the two observation periods. Canton trust and trustworthiness are calculated using Swiss-national non-movers, and μ_i is the error term.

Individual trust is standardized before residualizing for survey-year effects and constructing the pre- and post-move averages. Individual trust and canton-average trust use the same normalization by the standard deviation of individual person-wave trust responses. Consequently, each conditional partial effect, $\gamma_1 + \gamma'_4 Z_i$, is numerically equivalent to the model-implied change in migrants' trust points associated with a one-point higher level of destination-canton trust on the original 0–10 scale, holding the other covariates fixed. The SPEs and APE therefore have the same units as the continuous-treatment coefficients reported in Table 5.

Figure 6 presents the average partial effect (black line) and the sorted conditional partial effects (blue line), together with 90% bootstrap confidence intervals. The es-

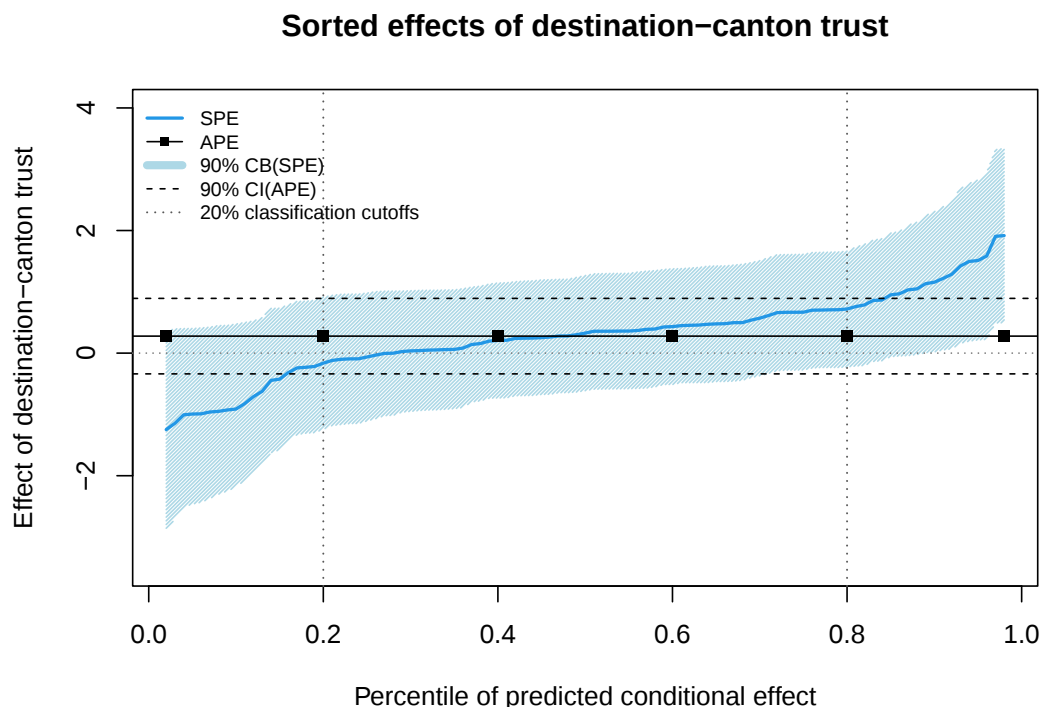


Figure 6 : Average and sorted partial effects of destination-canton trust on changes in migrants' trust

Note: The blue line reports the sorted conditional partial effects (SPEs) of average trust in the destination canton on changes in migrants' trust, while the solid black line reports the average partial effect (APE). Partial effects are expressed as trust points per one-point increase in destination-canton trust, with both underlying trust measures interpreted on the original 0–10 scale. This interpretation follows from using the same normalization for individual and canton-average trust. The shaded area is the 90% bootstrap uniform confidence band for the SPEs, and the dashed horizontal lines show the 90% confidence interval for the APE. The vertical dotted lines identify the largest and smallest 20% of predicted effects. The panel is collapsed into one observation per migrant, and the dependent variable is the difference between average post- and pre-move trust, residualized for survey-year effects. Destination-canton trust is interacted with gender, age at migration, pre-move education, pre-move log personal income, and trustworthiness in the origin and destination cantons. Continuous effect modifiers are mean-centered; trustworthiness retains its original 0–10 index scale. The specification also controls for average trust in the origin canton and the time between the pre- and post-move means. Canton trust and trustworthiness are calculated using Swiss-national non-movers. Confidence intervals are based on 999 bootstrap replications. The estimation sample contains 352 migrants.

timated conditional effects vary substantially across migrants and are predominantly positive. The SPE crosses zero at approximately the 28th percentile, implying that around 70% of the point estimates are above zero.

At the median of the fitted partial-effect distribution, a one-point higher level of destination-canton trust is associated with a 0.33-point larger adjusted pre-to-post

change in migrants' trust. The partial effects at the 20th and 80th percentiles are -0.16 and 0.72 trust points per one-point increase in destination-canton trust, respectively. However, the confidence bands are wide and include zero across most of the distribution; only in approximately the uppermost decile is the 90% uniform confidence band entirely above zero. The confidence interval around the APE also includes zero. Given that the estimation sample contains 352 migrants, these results should therefore be interpreted cautiously. The point estimates suggest that conditional effects are positive for most migrants and particularly large for some, but they do not provide precise evidence about the proportion of underlying effects that is positive.

Following [Chernozhukov et al. \(2018\)](#), Table 6 compares the 20% of migrants with the largest predicted conditional effects with the 20% with the smallest. Migrants in the largest-effect group have lower pre-move income and come from origin cantons with higher average trust and trustworthiness. These three differences remain statistically significant after accounting for simultaneous inference. Average trust and trustworthiness in the destination canton are also higher in the largest-effect group, but these differences do not remain significant under simultaneous inference.

Although the differences in gender and age are not statistically significant, their point estimates are consistent with patterns suggested by related research. The largest-effect group contains a higher proportion of women (54%, compared with 41%). This direction is consistent with [Moschion and Tabasso \(2014\)](#), who find that, among second-generation immigrants in Australia, women's trust appears less strongly tied to the origin-country environment than men's, which they interpret as potentially faster adaptation to the host environment. Related evidence from other cultural attitudes also suggests stronger first-generation adaptation among women ([Röder and Mühlau, 2014](#)).

Migrants in the largest-effect group are also approximately seven years younger on average (35.5, compared with 42.7 years). This pattern is qualitatively consistent with the impressionable-years hypothesis ([Krosnick and Alwin, 1989](#)), although the estimated age difference is also not statistically distinguishable from zero.

Table 6—: Characteristics of migrants in the largest and smallest 20% of predicted effects

Characteristic	Largest 20%	Smallest 20%	Difference	Pointwise <i>p</i> -value	Simultaneous <i>p</i> -value
Own trust before moving	5.88 (0.27)	6.00 (0.27)	-0.12 (0.42)	0.388	1.000
Female	0.54 (0.16)	0.41 (0.15)	0.14 (0.29)	0.316	0.997
Age when moved	35.45 (6.29)	42.68 (5.06)	-7.22 (10.67)	0.249	0.986
Log personal income before moving	9.43 (0.29)	11.16 (0.17)	-1.73 (0.43)	< 0.001	0.020
Education (years) before moving	13.91 (1.17)	14.51 (1.19)	-0.60 (2.19)	0.393	1.000
Years between pre- and post-move means	6.88 (0.34)	7.57 (0.27)	-0.70 (0.51)	0.084	0.684
Average trust in canton of origin	6.32 (0.04)	5.78 (0.13)	0.54 (0.14)	< 0.001	0.020
Average trust in destination canton	6.38 (0.05)	6.06 (0.08)	0.31 (0.12)	0.005	0.145
Origin-canton trustworthiness	8.78 (0.04)	8.21 (0.08)	0.58 (0.11)	< 0.001	0.001
Destination-canton trustworthiness	8.63 (0.04)	8.41 (0.08)	0.22 (0.10)	0.016	0.285

Note: The table compares the 20% of migrants with the largest predicted conditional partial effects with the 20% with the smallest. The treatment variable is average trust in the destination canton; average trust in the canton of origin is included as a control. Group membership is determined by the fitted partial effects. Descriptive statistics are reported using unstandardized, uncentered variables. Own pre-move trust and average trust in the origin and destination cantons are reported on the original 0–10 scale. Own pre-move trust is averaged across pre-move waves after nearest-neighbor interpolation. Canton trustworthiness is reported on the 0–10 scale of the unstandardized index, which averages six reverse-coded items; higher values indicate less tolerance of dishonest behavior. Female is the proportion of women. Age, education, and the time between the pre- and post-move means are measured in years. Income is the natural logarithm of annual net personal income. Education and income are measured at each variable’s last available pre-move observation. Difference is Largest minus Smallest. Bias-corrected bootstrap standard errors are in parentheses. Pointwise *p*-values test each characteristic separately. Simultaneous *p*-values account for joint inference across all reported characteristics. Canton trust and trustworthiness are calculated using Swiss-national non-movers. The estimation sample contains 352 migrants.

VIII. Conclusion

When migrants move to a new place, they face the challenge of integrating into the destination society. This process may involve entering the labor market, learning the language and local culture, forming families, and developing new social relationships. An important dimension of this process is generalized trust, which is associated with a wide range of desirable social, political, and economic outcomes. In this paper, I ex-

amine whether the trust of first-generation internal migrants in Switzerland converges toward the level prevailing in their destination cantons. The main empirical challenge is to distinguish assimilation from the sorting of migrants across destinations. Longitudinal datasets that follow migrants themselves over time are rare, particularly when information from before migration is required ([Abramitzky et al., 2020](#)). Moreover, even longitudinal surveys often measure generalized trust only once for each respondent.

The panel structure of the SHP allows me to follow migrants before and after they move over a 17-year period. I combine this longitudinal variation with differences in trust across Swiss cantons in an event-study difference-in-differences design. I estimate the effects separately for migrants moving to higher- and lower-trust cantons, comparing those who have already moved with those who will move later. Within each migration direction, trust follows similar trends across migration cohorts before the move, with no evidence of anticipation, and early and later movers have similar observed demographic characteristics. These patterns support the identifying assumptions; under parallel trends and no anticipation, the post-move estimates can be interpreted as the causal effects of entering a different canton trust environment.

I find quick and economically meaningful changes in migrants' trust. Trust rises by 0.14 standard deviations among migrants moving to higher-trust cantons and falls by 0.10 standard deviations among those moving to lower-trust cantons. These magnitudes are comparable to the education–trust associations corresponding to approximately 2.4 additional and 1.7 fewer years of education, respectively, among Swiss-national non-movers. In the collapsed continuous-treatment specification, a one-point higher level of destination-canton trust on the original 0–10 scale is associated with a 0.49-point larger pre-to-post change in migrants' trust. This estimate remains similar when trust changes are allowed to vary with education and log personal income measured before migration. I also find no evidence that migrants' personal income increases differentially after migration. This reduces the concern that the estimated increase in trust is instead driven by an improvement in migrants' economic circumstances after moving.

Importantly, the relationship with destination-canton trust does not appear to be driven by differences in measured trustworthiness across destination cantons. When

destination-canton trust and trustworthiness are included jointly, the coefficient on trust becomes somewhat larger, although less precisely estimated, whereas the coefficient on trustworthiness is small and statistically insignificant. Thus, the main relationship does not appear to reflect broader canton-level norms of trustworthy behavior. Moreover, I find no statistically significant convergence toward destination-canton averages in religious attendance or political orientation. The response of trust therefore does not appear to reflect a general tendency for all attitudes and behaviors to change after migration.

The findings are also robust to several additional checks. The continuous-treatment estimate is similar when destination-canton trust is measured in 2002, before any of the migrations in the estimation sample, reducing concerns about the reflection problem. The continuous-treatment estimates also remain similar after weighting for observed predictors of inclusion in the complete pre- and post-move sample. Finally, I find no corresponding assimilation in trust in the federal government, reducing concerns that the main result reflects a general change in survey-response behavior or other features of the interview process.

I further explore heterogeneity using the sorted partial effects method ([Chernozhukov et al., 2018](#)). The estimated conditional effects are above zero for most migrants, although the wide confidence bands and the sample of 352 migrants require caution. Migrants with the largest predicted effects have lower pre-move income and come from cantons with higher average trust and trustworthiness. They are also more likely to be female and younger, but these differences are not statistically significant. Larger samples are therefore needed to establish which individual and contextual characteristics systematically facilitate adaptation.

Disentangling whether the observed assimilation reflects changes in beliefs, preferences, or both is difficult without a controlled experiment ([Giuliano and Spilimbergo, 2025](#)). The relatively rapid response is consistent with migrants updating their beliefs about others. The suggestive tendency toward larger effects among younger migrants may also be consistent with greater malleability of preferences earlier in adulthood, although the age difference is not statistically significant and does not identify the

underlying mechanism. Further research combining longitudinal and experimental evidence could try and disentangle these channels. Existing evidence nevertheless suggests that beliefs and preferences may interact and reinforce one another in shaping trusting behavior (Kim et al., 2022; Alesina and Giuliano, 2015; Tabellini, 2008).

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Online Appendix: Migration and Trust: Evidence on Assimilation from Internal Migrants

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ONLINE APPENDIX

A1. Event study results: Moving to higher trust cantons

Table OA.1—: Event study analysis with migrants moving to higher-trust cantons

	Coef.	s.e.	P-value	C.I. low	C.I. high
Pre migration average	-0.013	0.025	0.592	-0.062	0.035
Post migration average	0.314	0.165	0.057	-0.010	0.639
Tm7	-0.104	0.179	0.560	-0.455	0.246
Tm6	0.046	0.150	0.760	-0.248	0.340
Tm5	0.107	0.174	0.540	-0.235	0.448
Tm4	-0.037	0.150	0.807	-0.332	0.258
Tm3	-0.074	0.137	0.589	-0.344	0.195
Tm2	0.026	0.150	0.862	-0.267	0.319
Tm1	-0.056	0.127	0.659	-0.304	0.192
Tp0	0.154	0.118	0.192	-0.077	0.386
Tp1	0.381	0.144	0.008	0.099	0.663
Tp2	0.534	0.176	0.002	0.189	0.880
Tp3	0.257	0.196	0.188	-0.126	0.641
Tp4	0.227	0.221	0.303	-0.205	0.659
Tp5	0.298	0.228	0.191	-0.149	0.744
Tp6	0.163	0.267	0.543	-0.362	0.687
Tp7	0.501	0.316	0.112	-0.118	1.120
ATT	0.323	0.153	0.035	0.022	0.623

Note: The table reports event-study estimates for generalized trust on the original 0–10 scale. Tm denotes years before migration, and Tp denotes years since migration, with Tp0 indicating the year of the move. Each event-time estimate averages the corresponding group-time effects across migration cohorts, with weights proportional to the number of treated migrants contributing to each comparison. The pre-migration average gives equal weight to the reported estimates for years -7 through -1, and the post-migration average gives equal weight to years 0 through 7, including the migration year. The ATT at the bottom pools all estimable post-move group-time effects, weighting each by the number of treated migrants contributing to that comparison; it is not restricted to the displayed event-time window. Reported p-values are pointwise. The 95% pointwise confidence intervals are clustered at the individual level.

Table OA.2—: Event study analysis with migrants moving to higher-trust cantons, by cohort

	Coef.	s.e.	P-value	C.I. low	C.I. high
GAverage	0.193	0.141	0.173	-0.084	0.469
G2003	0.524	0.396	0.186	-0.252	1.301
G2004	0.598	0.502	0.233	-0.386	1.581
G2005	0.575	0.387	0.138	-0.184	1.333
G2006	-0.003	0.422	0.995	-0.831	0.825
G2007	-0.441	0.439	0.315	-1.301	0.419
G2008	0.339	0.377	0.369	-0.401	1.078
G2009	0.030	0.387	0.939	-0.730	0.789
G2010	1.508	0.845	0.074	-0.148	3.164
G2011	0.005	0.350	0.988	-0.681	0.692
G2012	0.533	0.403	0.186	-0.257	1.323
G2013	1.913	0.605	0.002	0.728	3.099
G2014	-0.320	0.262	0.223	-0.833	0.194
G2015	0.163	0.352	0.644	-0.527	0.853
G2016	-0.045	0.326	0.891	-0.684	0.595
G2017	-0.530	0.444	0.232	-1.401	0.340

Note: The table reports estimates for generalized trust on the original 0–10 scale, aggregated by migration cohort. Each G row refers to migrants who moved in the indicated year and averages their estimable post-move group-time effects, with weights proportional to the number of treated migrants contributing to each comparison. GAverage combines these cohort-specific averages with weights proportional to each cohort's mean number of contributing treated migrants across its estimable post-move periods. These averages use all estimable post-move comparisons and are not restricted to the event-time window shown in the event-study figures. Reported p-values are pointwise. The 95% pointwise confidence intervals are clustered at the individual level.

Table OA.3—: Event study analysis with migrants moving to higher-trust cantons, by calendar year

	Coef.	s.e.	P-value	C.I. low	C.I. high
CAverage	0.292	0.150	0.052	-0.002	0.585
T2003	-0.533	0.585	0.363	-1.680	0.614
T2004	0.372	0.389	0.339	-0.391	1.135
T2005	0.439	0.368	0.233	-0.282	1.161
T2006	0.411	0.273	0.132	-0.123	0.946
T2007	0.240	0.277	0.386	-0.303	0.784
T2008	0.268	0.237	0.258	-0.197	0.733
T2009	0.469	0.249	0.059	-0.019	0.956
T2010	0.608	0.266	0.022	0.086	1.129
T2011	0.291	0.237	0.221	-0.175	0.756
T2012	0.326	0.256	0.204	-0.177	0.828
T2013	0.210	0.265	0.428	-0.309	0.728
T2014	0.671	0.244	0.006	0.193	1.149
T2015	0.004	0.237	0.985	-0.461	0.470
T2016	0.173	0.262	0.508	-0.340	0.686
T2017	0.424	0.298	0.155	-0.160	1.008

Note: The table reports estimates for generalized trust on the original 0–10 scale, aggregated by calendar year. Each T row averages the estimable group-time effects for cohorts that had moved by the indicated year, with weights proportional to the number of treated migrants contributing to each comparison. CAverage gives equal weight to the reported calendar-year estimates. These averages use all estimable post-move comparisons and are not restricted to the event-time window shown in the event-study figures. Reported p-values are pointwise. The 95% pointwise confidence intervals are clustered at the individual level.

A2. Event study results: Moving to lower trust cantons

Table OA.4—: Event study analysis with migrants moving to lower-trust cantons

	Coef.	s.e.	P-value	C.I. low	C.I. high
Pre migration average	0.013	0.021	0.532	-0.028	0.054
Post migration average	-0.247	0.127	0.052	-0.497	0.002
Tm7	0.056	0.158	0.720	-0.252	0.365
Tm6	-0.028	0.161	0.864	-0.343	0.287
Tm5	0.060	0.145	0.681	-0.224	0.343
Tm4	0.069	0.125	0.581	-0.176	0.315
Tm3	-0.061	0.107	0.566	-0.271	0.148
Tm2	-0.041	0.132	0.755	-0.300	0.218
Tm1	0.036	0.113	0.752	-0.186	0.258
Tp0	-0.172	0.098	0.080	-0.364	0.021
Tp1	-0.292	0.133	0.028	-0.552	-0.032
Tp2	-0.109	0.132	0.409	-0.368	0.150
Tp3	-0.196	0.166	0.237	-0.522	0.129
Tp4	-0.142	0.192	0.459	-0.517	0.234
Tp5	-0.263	0.206	0.202	-0.668	0.141
Tp6	-0.455	0.214	0.033	-0.874	-0.036
Tp7	-0.350	0.251	0.163	-0.841	0.142
ATT	-0.223	0.118	0.059	-0.455	0.008

Note: The table reports event-study estimates for generalized trust on the original 0–10 scale. Tm denotes years before migration, and Tp denotes years since migration, with Tp0 indicating the year of the move. Each event-time estimate averages the corresponding group-time effects across migration cohorts, with weights proportional to the number of treated migrants contributing to each comparison. The pre-migration average gives equal weight to the reported estimates for years -7 through -1, and the post-migration average gives equal weight to years 0 through 7, including the migration year. The ATT at the bottom pools all estimable post-move group-time effects, weighting each by the number of treated migrants contributing to that comparison; it is not restricted to the displayed event-time window. Reported p-values are pointwise. The 95% pointwise confidence intervals are clustered at the individual level.

Table OA.5—: Event study analysis with migrants moving to lower-trust cantons, by cohort

	Coef.	s.e.	P-value	C.I. low	C.I. high
GAverage	-0.291	0.113	0.010	-0.512	-0.069
G2003	-0.170	0.434	0.695	-1.022	0.681
G2004	-0.273	0.309	0.377	-0.879	0.333
G2005	0.320	0.387	0.408	-0.438	1.078
G2006	-0.396	0.323	0.220	-1.030	0.238
G2007	-0.818	0.345	0.018	-1.495	-0.142
G2008	-0.625	0.287	0.029	-1.187	-0.063
G2009	-0.575	0.632	0.363	-1.814	0.664
G2010	-0.432	0.323	0.180	-1.065	0.200
G2011	0.167	0.363	0.646	-0.545	0.879
G2012	-0.108	0.602	0.858	-1.287	1.071
G2013	0.271	0.289	0.348	-0.295	0.838
G2014	-0.263	0.229	0.250	-0.712	0.186
G2015	-0.141	0.240	0.556	-0.611	0.329
G2016	-0.372	0.319	0.244	-0.998	0.254
G2017	-0.911	0.453	0.044	-1.798	-0.024

Note: The table reports estimates for generalized trust on the original 0–10 scale, aggregated by migration cohort. Each G row refers to migrants who moved in the indicated year and averages their estimable post-move group-time effects, with weights proportional to the number of treated migrants contributing to each comparison. GAverage combines these cohort-specific averages with weights proportional to each cohort's mean number of contributing treated migrants across its estimable post-move periods. These averages use all estimable post-move comparisons and are not restricted to the event-time window shown in the event-study figures. Reported p-values are pointwise. The 95% pointwise confidence intervals are clustered at the individual level.

Table OA.6—: Event study analysis with migrants moving to lower-trust cantons, by calendar year

	Coef.	s.e.	P-value	C.I. low	C.I. high
CAverage	-0.200	0.126	0.112	-0.448	0.047
T2003	-0.617	0.573	0.281	-1.739	0.505
T2004	-0.250	0.378	0.509	-0.991	0.492
T2005	0.103	0.263	0.695	-0.413	0.620
T2006	-0.399	0.249	0.109	-0.887	0.090
T2007	0.339	0.274	0.216	-0.198	0.877
T2008	0.166	0.200	0.408	-0.226	0.558
T2009	-0.162	0.229	0.479	-0.611	0.287
T2010	-0.243	0.196	0.214	-0.628	0.141
T2011	-0.295	0.201	0.142	-0.688	0.098
T2012	-0.425	0.210	0.044	-0.837	-0.012
T2013	-0.125	0.212	0.554	-0.541	0.290
T2014	-0.418	0.189	0.028	-0.789	-0.046
T2015	-0.155	0.183	0.398	-0.514	0.204
T2016	-0.144	0.235	0.540	-0.604	0.316
T2017	-0.384	0.233	0.099	-0.840	0.073

Note: The table reports estimates for generalized trust on the original 0–10 scale, aggregated by calendar year. Each T row averages the estimable group-time effects for cohorts that had moved by the indicated year, with weights proportional to the number of treated migrants contributing to each comparison. CAverage gives equal weight to the reported calendar-year estimates. These averages use all estimable post-move comparisons and are not restricted to the event-time window shown in the event-study figures. Reported p-values are pointwise. The 95% pointwise confidence intervals are clustered at the individual level.

A3. Measuring trust: Experimental literature

Some early papers comparing self-reported trust with experimental measures reported mixed results.¹ Glaeser et al. (2000) found that standard survey measures of trust were strongly associated with trustworthiness but not with trusting behavior. Similar results were obtained by Ermisch et al. (2009), while Lazzarini et al. (2005) found a more nuanced relationship, with survey trust predicting trustworthiness and, under some experimental conditions, trusting behavior. Much of this early literature relied on relatively small experimental samples, leading to concerns about external validity (Murtin et al., 2018).

Fehr et al. (2003) used a large representative sample in Germany and found no correlations between self-reported trust in others and experimental measures of either one's trust or trustworthiness. On the other hand, in a meta-analysis of experiments run in 35 countries, Johnson and Mislin (2012) finds a strong positive correlation with the experimental measure of trust. Similarly, Murtin et al. (2018) finds a positive correlation between the generalized trust question and the experimental measures using representative samples from France, Germany, Italy, Korea, Slovenia, and the United States.

Sapienza et al. (2013) disentangle the preferences from the beliefs components in the sender's decision in the trust game. They conclude that self-reported trust mainly captures beliefs while the amount sent in an experiment confounds the two components.² Partially confirming this, Murtin et al. (2018) finds experimental measures of expected trustworthiness (i.e., beliefs) and altruism (i.e., preferences) to be the strongest predictors of self-reported trust.³ Instead, when looking at cooperation in public good games, Thöni et al. (2012) finds that the generalized trust question is related to preferences for cooperation rather than beliefs about others' cooperativeness.

¹Experimental measures operationalize trust as the amount sent and trustworthiness as the money returned in a Berg-Dickhaut-McCabe Investment Game (commonly known as the Trust Game) (Berg et al., 1995).

²Interestingly, the papers finding no correlation with trust but with trustworthiness did not endow the trustee. According to Aksoy et al. (2018), this induces more altruism from the trustor, which worsens the confounding between beliefs and preferences (see also Ashraf et al. (2006) and Cox (2004)). They replicate the experiment endowing both parties and find a significant correlation between the self-reported and experimental measures.

³Fehr (2009) shows that self-reported trust is also driven by risk and betrayal aversion.

Altogether, by capturing expected trustworthiness, altruism, and preferences for co-operation, self-reported trust is a good predictor of many desirable social, political, and economic outcomes (Nunn and Wantchekon, 2011; Algan and Cahuc, 2010) and, thus, understanding how migrants develop this is important. Although disentangling assimilation in beliefs from assimilation in preferences would be a difficult task with non-experimental data, one can expect that both components (beliefs and preferences) affect behavior in the same direction (Kim et al., 2022; Alesina and Giuliano, 2015; Tabellini, 2008).⁴ Related to this, Kim et al. (2022) finds that people make the same inferences from the trusting as from the trustworthiness of others.

A4. Full regressions from the descriptive evidence section

The large majority of the literature on cultural assimilation (mostly in adjacent fields) has relied on the epidemiological approach (See Fernández and Fogli, 2006; Fernandez, 2007; Giuliano, 2007) sometimes exploiting the time spent in the destination (Marino Fages and Morales Cerda, 2022; Helliwell et al., 2016; Wu, 2020, 2021; Cameron et al., 2015; Dinesen and Hooghe, 2010; Dinesen, 2013, 2012; Nannestad et al., 2014; Kim, 2021). The approach involves studying individuals from different backgrounds in one specific location (holding culture and institutions at the destination constant). Here, I examine the association between migrants' trust and average trust in their destination canton, conditional on fixed effects for nationality or canton of origin and individual characteristics. Specifically, I estimate:

$$(A1) \quad Trust_{irh} = \alpha + \beta_1 \overline{Trust_r} + \beta_2 X_i + Origin_h + \epsilon_{irh},$$

where $Trust_{irh}$ denotes individual i 's average trust after removing survey-year effects, retaining the units of the original 0–10 trust scale. $\overline{Trust_r}$ is average trust in the destination canton, also measured on the original 0–10 scale. $Origin_h$ denotes nation-

⁴One could potentially argue, as Fehr (2009) conjectures, that the speed of assimilation can give some evidence about this, since beliefs are likely to be more malleable and change more quickly in response variations in the prevailing conditions.

ality fixed effects for international migrants and origin-canton fixed effects for internal migrants, X_i is a vector of control variables, and ϵ_{irh} is the error term. I estimate separate regressions for international migrants, internal migrants after moving, and internal migrants before moving. In the pre-move regression, the explanatory variable is trust in the future destination canton.

Each regression contains one observation per individual. For international migrants, I average trust and controls across eligible waves in which first nationality is recorded as non-Swiss, restricting the sample to individuals with no observed inter-cantonal moves. Nationality fixed effects use the nationality recorded in each individual's first eligible wave. For internal migrants, I average observations separately before and after moving. The sample excludes Fribourg, Jura, Neuchatel, Ticino, Vaud, and Valais; internal migrants must have both origin and destination cantons in the retained set. Standard errors use 200 bootstrap replications resampling individuals, with survey-year residualization and canton averages held fixed.

Table [OA.7](#) presents the results. A one-point higher level of destination-canton trust is associated with 0.706 more trust points among international migrants (s.e. 0.321) and 1.105 more trust points among internal migrants after moving (s.e. 0.615), conditional on the included covariates and fixed effects. The international-migrant association is statistically significant at the 5% level ($p = 0.028$), while the internal-migrant association is significant at the 10% level ($p = 0.072$).

To assess whether the positive post-move association could reflect sorting, I examine whether internal migrants' trust before moving is related to average trust in their future destination canton. A positive pre-move association would suggest that more trusting individuals select higher-trust destinations. Column 3 reports a small negative estimate that is statistically indistinguishable from zero (coefficient -0.071 , s.e. 0.578). The comparison therefore provides no evidence of this sorting pattern, although the estimate is imprecise and cannot rule it out. These descriptive regressions alone are thus insufficient to establish whether the post-move association reflects assimilation.

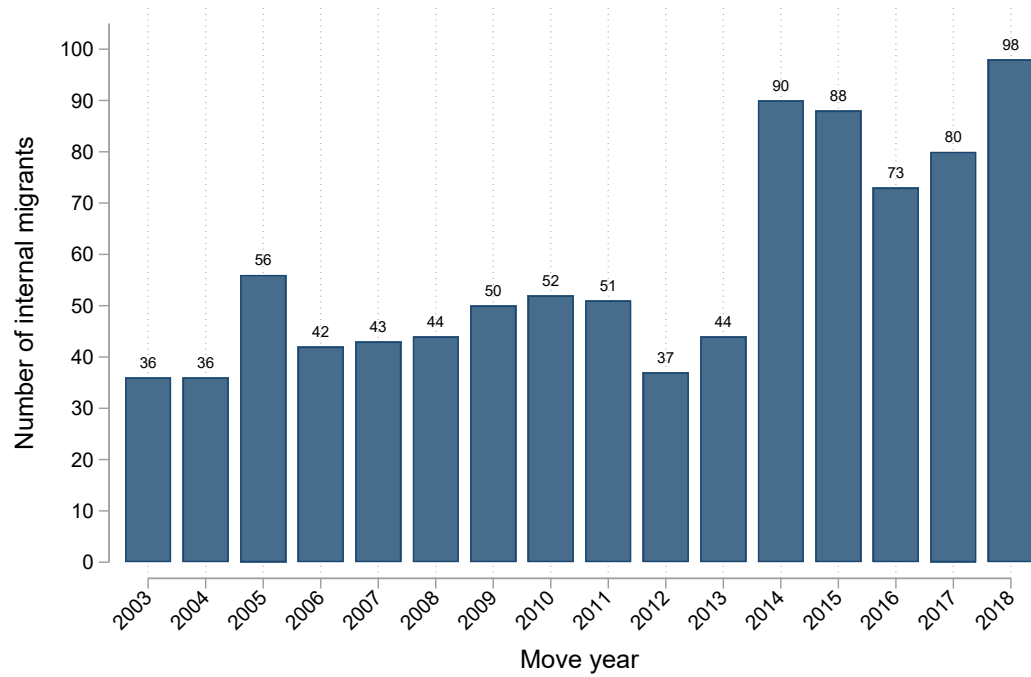


Figure OA.1 : Year of Move Among Internal Migrants

Note: The figure shows the number of one-time Swiss-national internal migrants aged 15 and older by year of move. Migrants moving before 2005 and after 2016 are included in the figure but are not used in the main regression sample because the regression requires at least three pre-move and three post-move observations.

Table OA.7—: Association between destination-canton trust and migrants' individual trust

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	International	Internal	Internal (pre-move)
Average destination-canton trust	0.706 (0.321)	1.105 (0.615)	-0.071 (0.578)
Age	0.003 (0.005)	-0.002 (0.005)	-0.011 (0.006)
Female	0.034 (0.129)	0.243 (0.180)	0.189 (0.156)
Married	0.202 (0.146)	0.265 (0.183)	-0.174 (0.247)
Years of education	0.116 (0.022)	0.122 (0.029)	0.091 (0.034)
Log personal income	-0.044 (0.089)	-0.011 (0.128)	-0.134 (0.091)
Years since arrival	0.002 (0.006)		
Constant	-6.463 (2.279)	-9.404 (4.238)	0.619 (3.929)
Nationality fixed effects	Yes	No	No
Origin-canton fixed effects	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,052	530	508
Individuals	1,052	530	508
R-squared	0.140	0.094	0.096

Note: The dependent variable is average individual trust after removing survey-year effects from responses on the original 0–10 scale. Destination-canton trust is also measured on the original 0–10 scale and is calculated by pooling Swiss-national non-movers over 2002–2018. Its coefficient is the difference in residualized individual trust points associated with a one-point higher destination-canton trust level, conditional on the reported controls and fixed effects. Column 1 contains one observation per individual with no observed inter-cantonal moves. Trust and controls are averaged across eligible waves in which first nationality is recorded as non-Swiss. Nationality fixed effects use the nationality recorded in each individual's first eligible wave, assigned before restricting to complete person-level regression observations. Columns 2 and 3 use Swiss-national one-time internal migrants, averaging post-move and pre-move observations, respectively, and relating both outcomes to destination-canton trust. The sample excludes Fribourg, Jura, Neuchatel, Ticino, Vaud, and Valais; the internal-migrant regressions require both origin and destination cantons to be in the retained set. Controls are age, gender, marital status, years of education, and log annual net personal income; column 1 also controls for years since arrival in Switzerland. Personal income is measured in Swiss francs before taking logarithms. Standard errors in parentheses use 200 bootstrap replications resampling individuals, with survey-year residualization and canton averages held fixed. The estimates describe conditional associations.

Table OA.8—: Characteristics of future internal migrants and non-movers

	Swiss-national non-movers		Future one-time internal migrants		Difference	p-value
	N	Mean (s.d.)	N	Mean (s.d.)		
Age	23,082	41.77 (19.68)	899	34.54 (16.11)	-7.226	0.00
Female	23,082	0.51 (0.50)	899	0.52 (0.50)	0.009	0.60
Married	23,082	0.46 (0.50)	899	0.30 (0.46)	-0.160	0.00
Personal income (CHF)	8,495	49,488 (54,725)	506	46,595 (36,741)	-2,894	0.10
Education (years)	16,364	12.22 (3.06)	746	12.70 (3.18)	0.480	0.00
HH size	9,180	2.48 (1.34)	339	2.23 (1.28)	-0.245	0.00
Own trust	11,086	5.61 (2.45)	585	5.69 (2.28)	0.078	0.42
Canton trust	23,082	6.22 (0.31)	899	6.24 (0.29)	0.022	0.03

Note: The table compares Swiss-national non-movers with Swiss-national future one-time internal migrants. The table uses one person-level observation per respondent, measured in the first observed survey wave in which the respondent is aged 15 or older. Future internal migrants are kept only if this first eligible observation occurs before the move. The difference column reports the coefficient from a regression of each variable on an indicator for being a future one-time internal migrant, so positive values indicate higher values among future migrants. Robust p-values are reported in the last column. Personal income is annual net personal income measured in Swiss francs.

Table OA.9—: Changes in education and log personal income among internal migrants and matched non-movers

Variable	Group	N	Changed	Last pre	Post mean	Mean diff.	Median diff.
Education (years)	Future one-time internal migrants	363	47 (12.9%)	14.17	14.57	0.398	0.000
	Age-year matched non-movers	19,444	1,922 (9.9%)	13.49	13.78	0.288	0.000
Log personal income	Future one-time internal migrants	338	337 (99.7%)	10.60	10.81	0.206	0.097
	Age-year matched non-movers	16,050	15,997 (99.7%)	10.60	10.76	0.163	0.060

Note: The table compares Swiss-national future one-time internal migrants with all eligible Swiss-national non-mover reference observations in the same calendar-year-by-age cells. For migrants, the reference year is the move year. For non-movers, it is a pseudo-reference year from the matched age-year cell. Last pre is the respondent's last observed value before the move or pseudo-reference year, and post mean is the respondent's average value from that year onward. The sample includes reference observations with at least three survey waves before and at least three survey waves after the move or pseudo-reference year. Since a non-mover may be observed in more than one matched reference-year-by-age cell, the non-mover N refers to reference observations. Changed reports the number and percentage of observations whose post mean differs from the last pre value.

A5. Balance check international

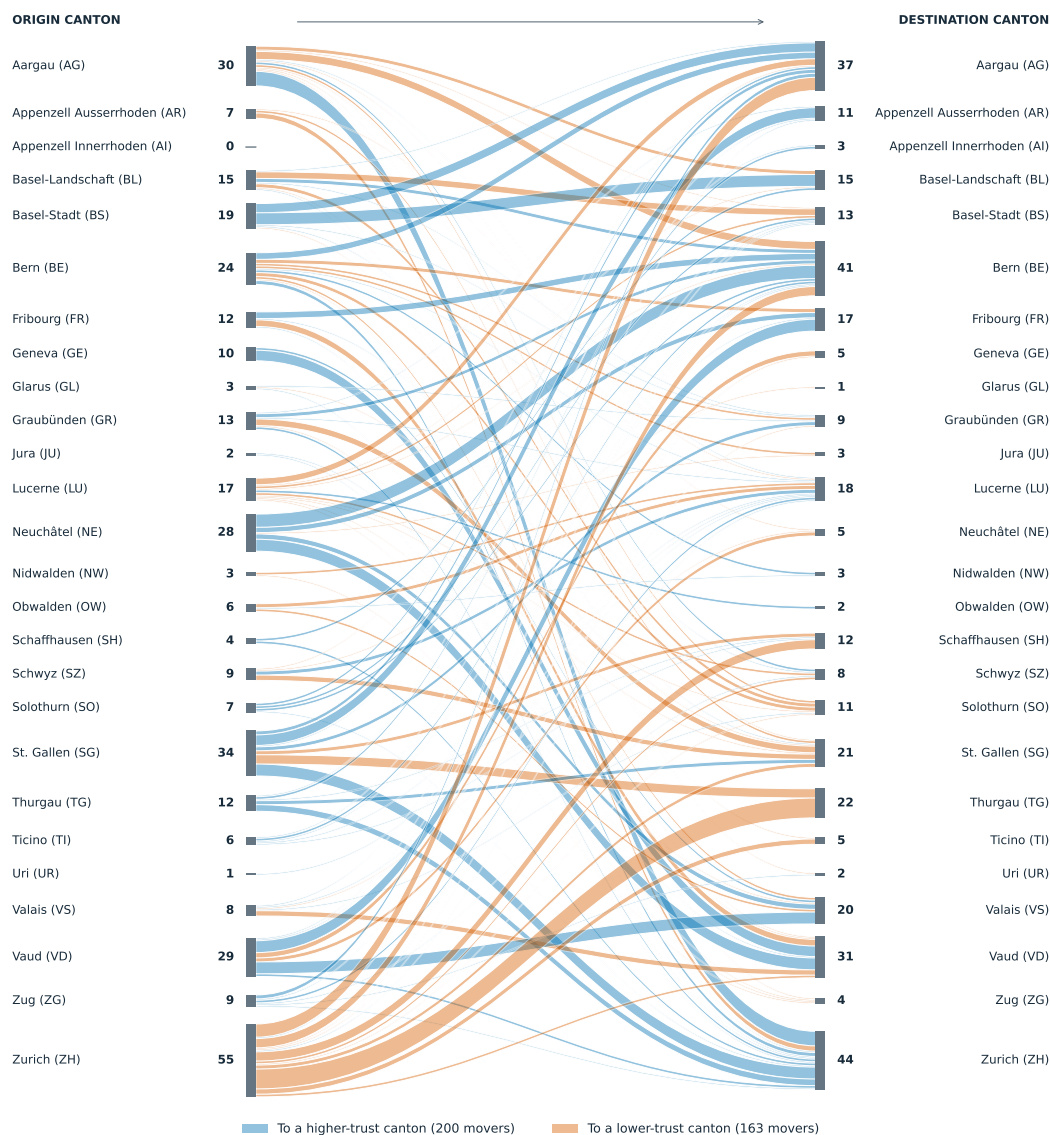
Table OA.10 compares the observable characteristics of international migrants living in cantons with above- and below-median trust. None of the reported differences in age, gender, marital status, years of education, personal income, household size, or years since arrival in Switzerland is statistically significant at the 5% level.

Table OA.10—: Balance tests for International migrants

	Low Trust		High Trust		Coeff.	p-value
	N	Mean (s.d.)	N	Mean (s.d.)		
After moving						
Age	2,211	37.39 (19.66)	2153	37.21 (19.06)	-0.175	0.77
Female	2,211	0.48 (0.50)	2153	0.48 (0.50)	-0.000	0.98
Married	2,211	0.47 (0.49)	2153	0.48 (0.49)	0.011	0.45
Personal income (CHF)	1,130	53,563 (74,743)	1,070	52,196 (39,747)	-1,366	0.59
Years since arrival	1,592	19.73 (15.02)	1582	18.94 (14.34)	-0.798	0.13
Education (years)	1,987	11.26 (4.97)	1939	11.13 (4.76)	-0.122	0.43
HH Size	1,071	2.68 (1.23)	1017	2.70 (1.28)	0.026	0.64

Note: The table shows the number of observations, means, standard deviations, coefficients and p-values of regressing each variable on an indicator that takes the value 1 for international migrants in cantons with trust above the median and 0 otherwise. Personal income is annual net personal income measured in Swiss francs.

Figure OA.2 : Inter-cantonal migration by direction of the trust gap



Notes: The figure shows the 363 migrants in the baseline estimation sample (Table 5, column 1), with moves occurring in 2005–2016. Each migrant is counted once. Ribbon widths are proportional to the unweighted number of migrants. Blue ribbons indicate moves to a canton with higher average generalized trust than the origin canton (200 migrants); orange ribbons indicate moves to a lower-trust canton (163 migrants). Canton trust is calculated by pooling valid responses from Swiss-national non-movers over 2002–2018. All 26 cantons appear in alphabetical order on both sides, including cantons with zero observed flows. Numbers beside cantons report departures on the left and arrivals on the right.

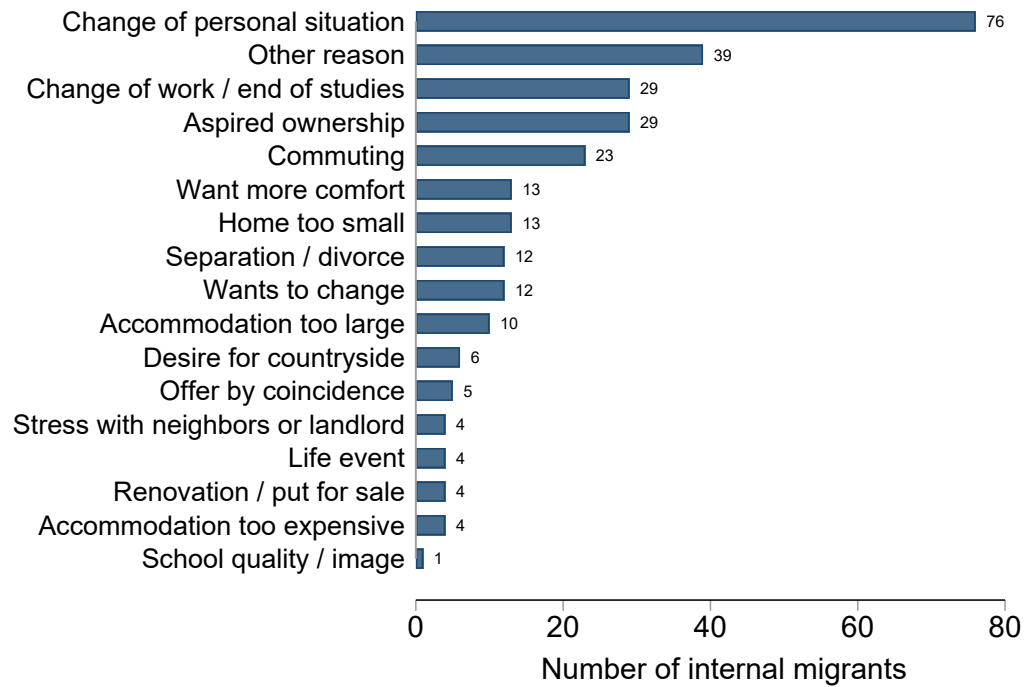


Figure OA.3 : Reasons for Moving Among Internal Migrants

Note: The figure reports the first stated reason for moving among Swiss internal migrants in the main analysis sample. Moving reasons are measured in the survey wave in which the move is observed, and invalid, missing, inapplicable, and no-answer responses are omitted.

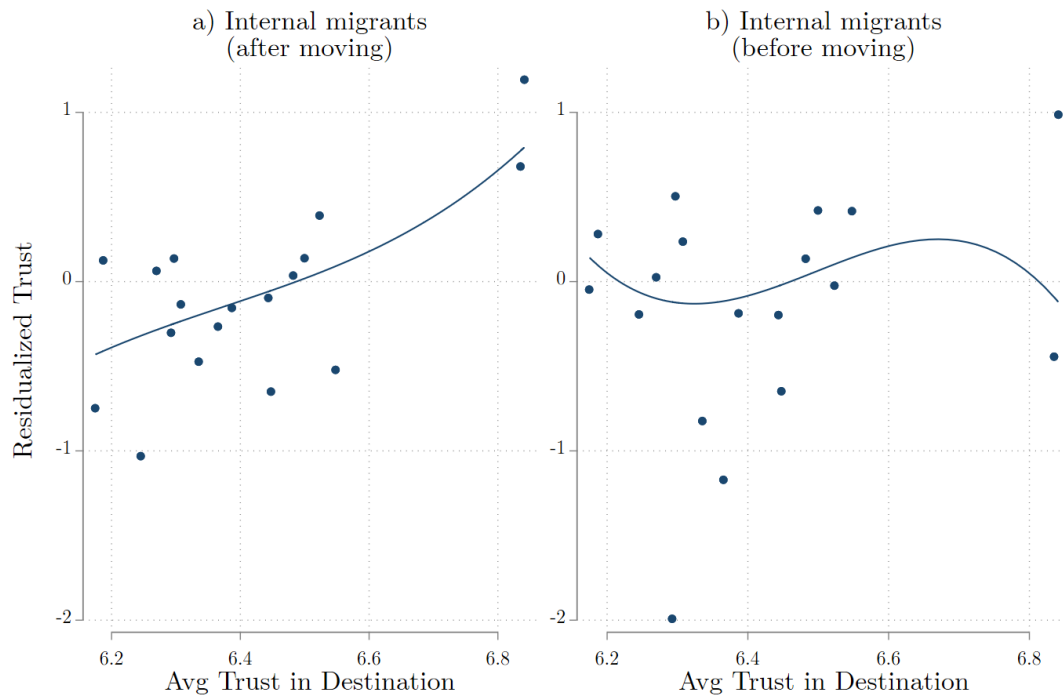


Figure OA.4 : Correlation between Residualized Trust and Average Trust in the destination canton (with cubic polynomial)

Note: The figure presents binsreg plots with cubic polynomial (Cattaneo et al., 2024) of migrant's trust and average trust in the destination canton (controlling for canton of origin) for internal migrants in German cantons before and after moving. To compute the Residualized Trust, I first regress the Trust variable on calendar year dummies, and then average all the residuals by individual.

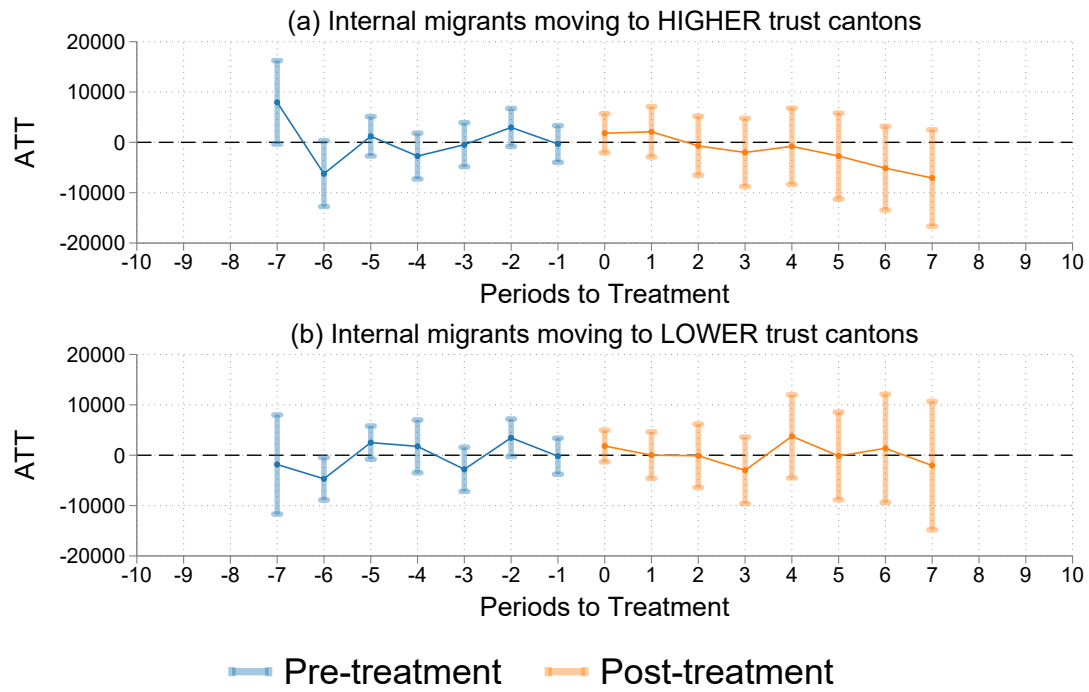


Figure OA.5 : Event study: Annual net personal income

Note: Panels (a) and (b) present event-study estimates of the effect of internal migration on annual net personal income for migrants moving to cantons with higher and lower average trust than their canton of origin, respectively. Estimates are expressed in Swiss francs. The spikes show 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered at the individual level. The horizontal dashed line marks zero effect. The analysis uses the Stata command `csdid` (Rios-Avila et al., 2021).

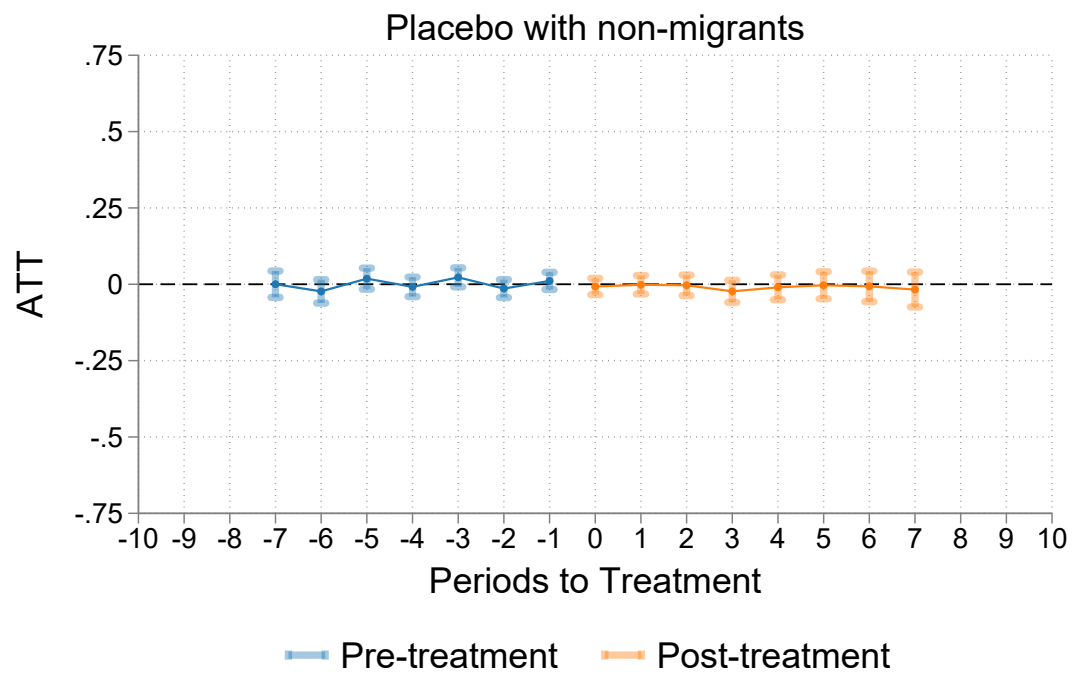


Figure OA.6 : Placebo

Note: The figure presents a placebo test in which I assign random destination cantons and moving dates between 2003 and 2017 to Swiss-national non-movers. The spikes show 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered at the individual level. The horizontal dashed line marks zero effect. Missing trust observations are filled using linear interpolation. The analysis uses the Stata command `csdid` ([Rios-Avila et al., 2021](#)).

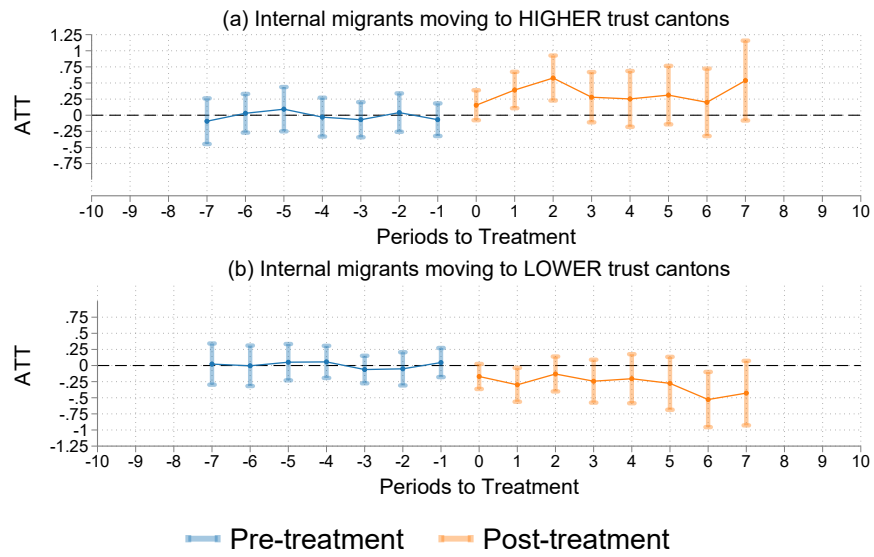


Figure OA.7 : Event study: Controlling for the trust gap between the cantons

Note: Panels (a) and (b) present event-study estimates of the effect of internal migration on generalized trust for migrants moving to cantons with higher and lower average trust than their canton of origin, respectively. The specification controls for the trust gap between the cantons of origin and destination. The spikes show 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered at the individual level. The horizontal dashed line marks zero effect. Missing trust observations are filled using nearest-neighbor interpolation.

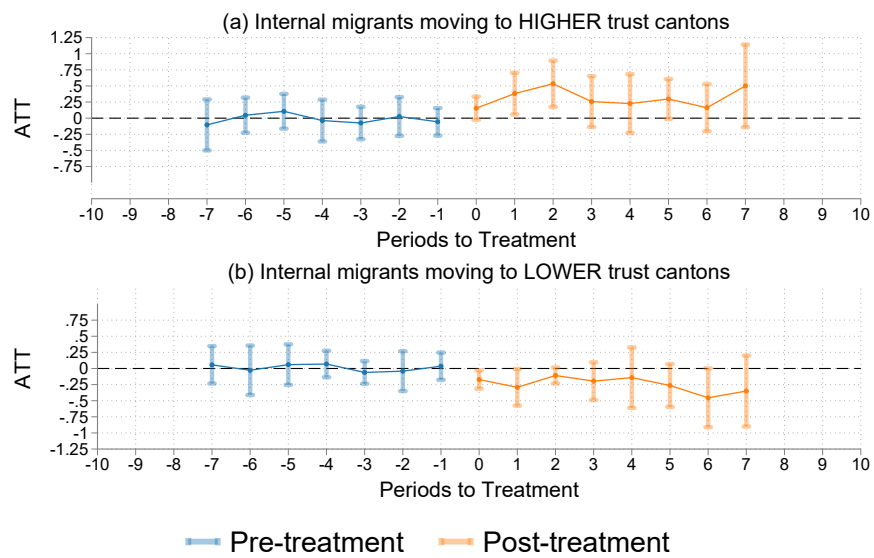


Figure OA.8 : Event study: Canton of origin clusters

Note: Panels (a) and (b) present event-study estimates of the effect of internal migration on generalized trust for migrants moving to cantons with higher and lower average trust than their canton of origin, respectively. The spikes show 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered by canton of origin. The horizontal dashed line marks zero effect. Missing trust observations are filled using nearest-neighbor interpolation.

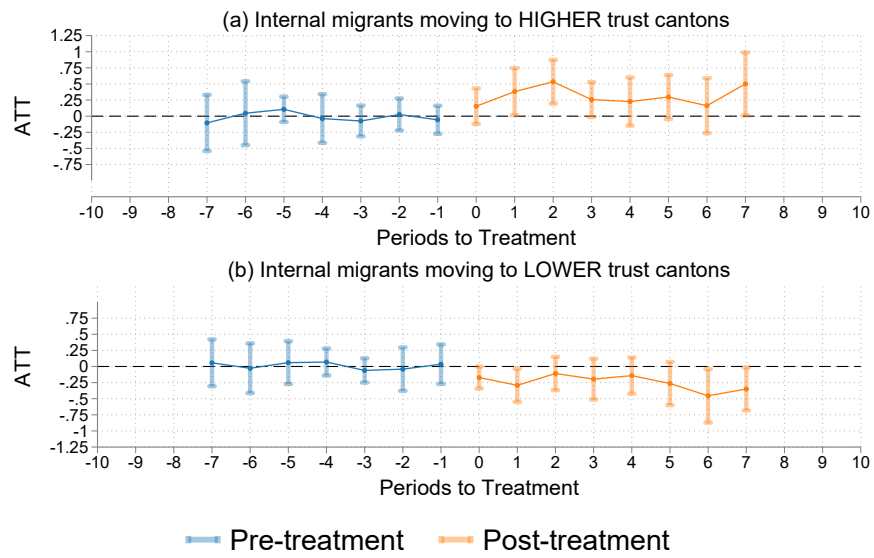


Figure OA.9 : Event study: Canton of destination cluster

Note: Panels (a) and (b) present event-study estimates of the effect of internal migration on generalized trust for migrants moving to cantons with higher and lower average trust than their canton of origin, respectively. The spikes show 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered by canton of destination. The horizontal dashed line marks zero effect. Missing trust observations are filled using nearest-neighbor interpolation.

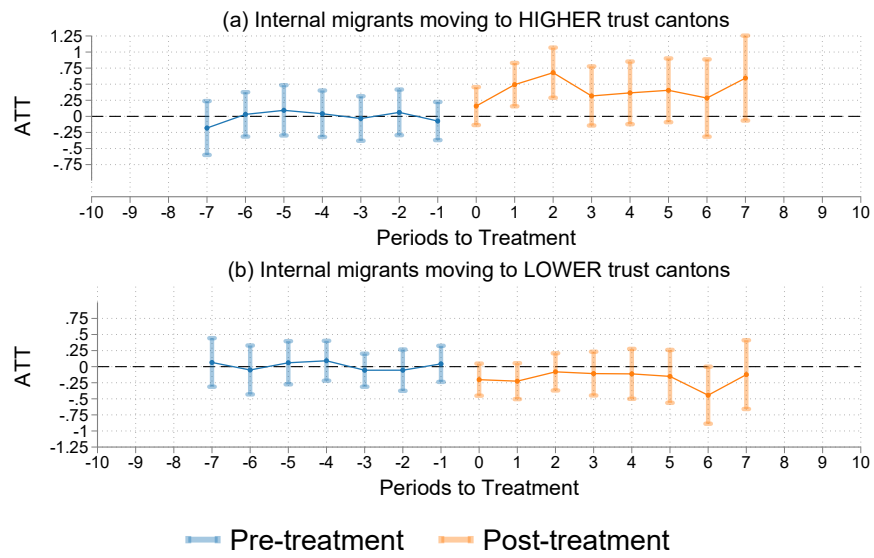


Figure OA.10 : Event study: no interpolation

Note: Panels (a) and (b) present event-study estimates of the effect of internal migration on generalized trust for migrants moving to cantons with higher and lower average trust than their canton of origin, respectively. The spikes show 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered at the individual level. The horizontal dashed line marks zero effect. Missing trust observations are not interpolated.

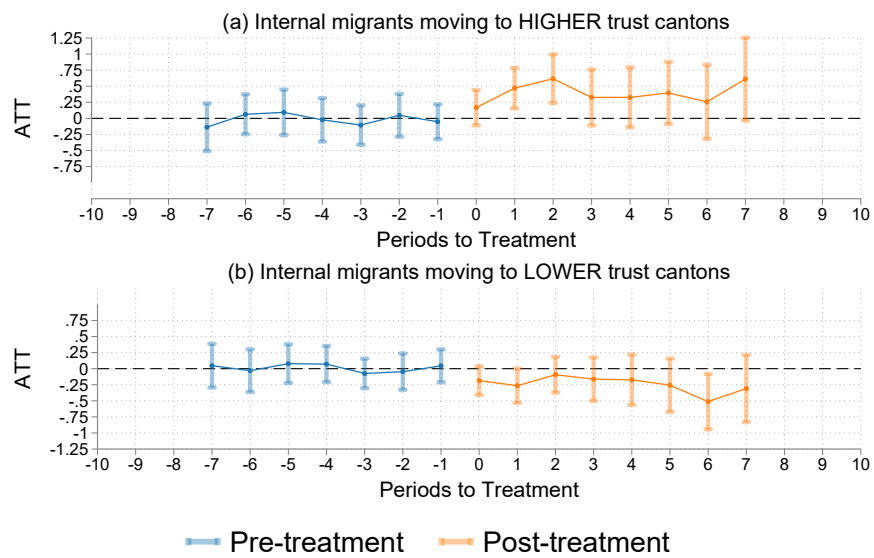


Figure OA.11 : Event study: linear interpolation

Note: Panels (a) and (b) present event-study estimates of the effect of internal migration on generalized trust for migrants moving to cantons with higher and lower average trust than their canton of origin, respectively. The spikes show 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered at the individual level. The horizontal dashed line marks zero effect. Missing trust observations are filled using linear interpolation.

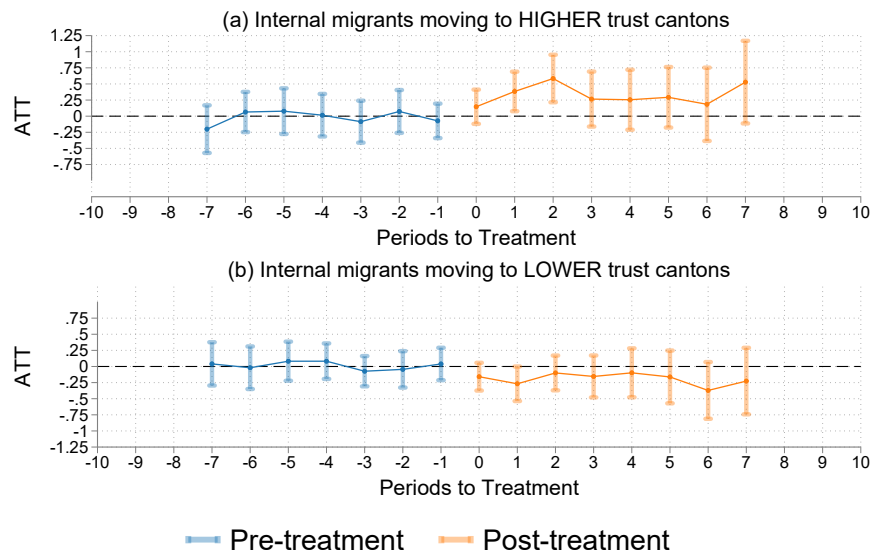


Figure OA.12 : Event study: forward interpolation

Note: Panels (a) and (b) present event-study estimates of the effect of internal migration on generalized trust for migrants moving to cantons with higher and lower average trust than their canton of origin, respectively. The spikes show 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered at the individual level. The horizontal dashed line marks zero effect. Missing trust observations are filled using forward interpolation.

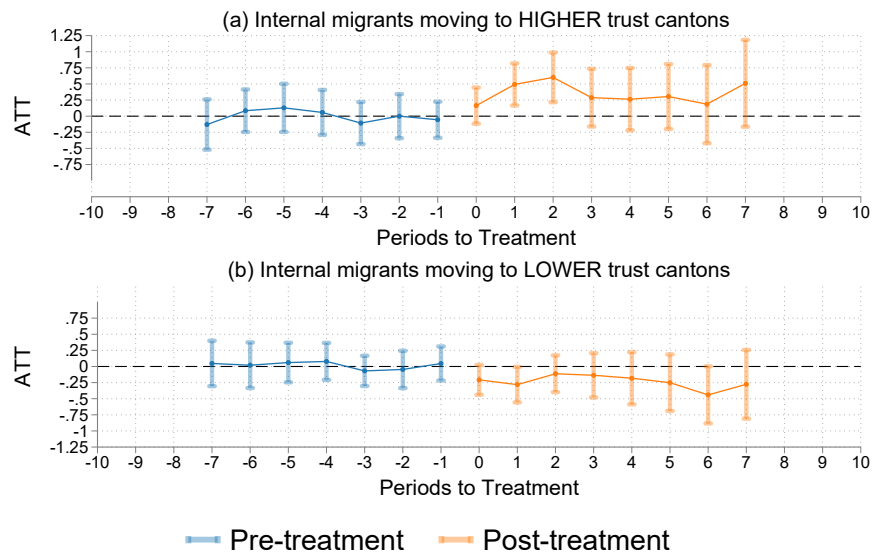


Figure OA.13 : Event study: splines interpolation

Note: Panels (a) and (b) present event-study estimates of the effect of internal migration on generalized trust for migrants moving to cantons with higher and lower average trust than their canton of origin, respectively. The spikes show 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered at the individual level. The horizontal dashed line marks zero effect. Missing trust observations are filled using spline interpolation.

Table OA.11—: Effect-Size Benchmark for Trust Assimilation

<i>Panel A. Education–trust benchmark</i>		
	Standardized trust	
Standardized education	0.177	
	(0.009)	
Observations	16,145	
R-squared	0.057	
<i>Panel B. Education-equivalent event-study effects</i>		
	Trust effect (SD trust)	Education equivalent (SD education)
Moving to a higher-trust canton	0.14	0.77
Moving to a lower-trust canton	-0.10	-0.53

Note: Panel A estimates the association between education and trust using Swiss-national non-movers aged 15 or older, keeping each person’s first usable observation between 2002 and 2018. Trust, education, and log personal income are standardized within the benchmark sample. The regression controls for standardized log personal income, age, age squared, gender, canton fixed effects, and interview-year fixed effects. In Panel B, the trust effects are the aggregate event-study ATTs divided by the standard deviation of individual person-wave trust responses used in the main analysis (2.25435 points). Education equivalents are calculated by dividing each raw trust ATT by the trust difference associated with one standard deviation of education in the benchmark regression. This conversion uses the benchmark sample’s trust standard deviation and the unrounded estimates. One standard deviation of education is 3.14 years in the benchmark sample. Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Table OA.12—: Trust and Civic/Prosocial Outcomes

Outcome	Mean	Association (SD outcome per SD trust)	Implied effect	Economic magnitude	N
Interest in politics	5.38	0.113*** (0.008)	0.043	0.8% of mean	16,135
Participation in federal polls	7.49	0.129*** (0.010)	0.056	0.7% of mean	12,916
Any association membership	65.7%	0.105*** (0.008)	0.68 pp	1.0% of mean	15,232
Political party member	9.2%	0.050*** (0.008)	0.20 pp	2.2% of mean	15,230
Charitable organization member	24.0%	0.072*** (0.008)	0.42 pp	1.8% of mean	15,227
Any donation	65.6%	0.105*** (0.010)	0.77 pp	1.2% of mean	9,278
Log total donation + 1	3.825	0.123*** (0.010)	0.060	6.2% increase	8,789
Voluntary work	44.4%	0.053*** (0.008)	0.38 pp	0.9% of mean	14,413
Log volunteer hours + 1	0.784	0.066*** (0.008)	0.011	1.1% increase	14,208

Notes: Each row reports a separate regression of the standardized outcome on standardized trust, controlling for standardized education, standardized log personal income, age, age squared, gender, canton fixed effects, and interview-year fixed effects. The sample consists of Swiss-national non-movers aged 15 or older, keeping each person's first usable observation for each outcome between 2002 and 2018 within the waves where that outcome is available. Standardization uses the estimation sample for each outcome. The association is expressed in standard deviations of the outcome per standard deviation of trust. The implied effect is calculated by multiplying this association by the outcome's standard deviation and by the aggregate event-study ATT for moves to higher-trust cantons (0.323 points on the original 0–10 trust scale), divided by the trust standard deviation in the same benchmark sample. All calculations use unrounded estimates. Implied effects are expressed in original outcome units, with percentage points (pp) used for binary outcomes and log points for log outcomes. Economic magnitude reports the implied effect as a percentage of the outcome mean for non-log outcomes. For outcomes measured as $\log(x+1)$, it reports 100 times $[\exp(\text{implied effect}) - 1]$, interpreted as the percentage change in $x+1$. These conversions provide descriptive benchmarks. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table OA.13—: Difference-in-differences results with contemporaneous controls

VARIABLES	(1) Trust	(2) Trust	(3) Trust	(4) Trust	(5) Trust	(6) Trust	(7) TrustFed	(8) TrustFed
Avg trust in canton X Post move	0.489 (0.204)	0.432 (0.212)	0.627 (0.297)	0.545 (0.318)				
Avg trustworthiness in canton X Post move			-0.176 (0.270)	-0.143 (0.291)				
Avg trust in canton (2002) X Post move					0.408 (0.152)	0.428 (0.169)		
Avg fed trust in canton X Post move							0.004 (0.442)	0.016 (0.465)
Post move	-0.005 (0.030)	-0.063 (0.139)	-0.004 (0.030)	-0.062 (0.139)	0.107 (0.046)	0.048 (0.136)	0.032 (0.034)	0.118 (0.178)
Education (years)		0.008 (0.018)		0.008 (0.018)		0.007 (0.018)		-0.025 (0.021)
Log personal income		-0.085 (0.045)		-0.086 (0.045)		-0.088 (0.044)		-0.035 (0.048)
Individual FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	726	676	726	676	726	676	624	612
R-squared	0.890	0.883	0.890	0.883	0.891	0.884	0.873	0.874

Note: The table presents OLS estimates from the two-period individual fixed-effects specification described in the main paper. For each outcome, I first residualize individual responses with respect to survey-year indicators and then calculate separate person-level means for the pre- and post-move periods. Individual trust and trust in the federal government are standardized across valid person-wave observations before residualization; the corresponding canton averages are expressed on the same standardized scale. The main regressor in columns 1–4 is the interaction between the post-move indicator and average trust in the destination canton, calculated by pooling valid trust responses from Swiss-national non-movers over 2002–2018. Columns 3 and 4 additionally include the interaction between the post-move indicator and average trustworthiness in the destination canton. Average canton trustworthiness is calculated among Swiss-national non-movers from a standardized index of six reverse-coded items observed in 2011, 2014, and 2017; higher values indicate greater trustworthiness. In columns 5 and 6, the post-move indicator is instead interacted with trust in the destination canton measured in 2002. Columns 7 and 8 replace individual trust in strangers and destination-canton trust with individual trust in the federal government and average trust in the federal government in the destination canton. Columns 2, 4, 6, and 8 include contemporaneous average age, education, and log personal income. The coefficient on average age and the regression constants are not reported. Because education and personal income may respond to migration, these specifications are presented only as robustness checks. All regressions include individual fixed effects. Standard errors, clustered at the individual level, are reported in parentheses. Log personal income is the natural logarithm of annual net personal income measured in Swiss francs.

Table OA.14—: Summary statistics of trust by canton in the full sample and year 2002

Canton	Trust (2002–2018)		Trust (2002)	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
Jura JU	4.93	2.61	3.33	4.16
Ticino TI	5.62	2.49	4.99	2.79
Neuchatel NE	5.73	2.37	5.09	2.76
Geneva GE	5.73	2.48	4.86	3.00
Vaud VD	5.77	2.42	5.12	2.71
Valais VS	5.91	2.37	5.00	3.03
Fribourg FR	5.97	2.39	5.26	2.97
Thurgovia TG	6.17	2.18	5.55	1.99
Solothurn SO	6.19	2.08	5.82	2.05
Schaffhausen SH	6.25	2.07	5.67	1.72
Zug ZG	6.27	2.05	5.50	2.13
Uri UR	6.29	2.29	6.29	2.97
Basle-Town BS	6.30	2.41	5.97	2.36
St. Gall SG	6.31	2.17	5.71	2.34
Basle-Country BL	6.34	2.06	5.83	2.17
Glarus GL	6.37	2.28	5.77	2.12
Grisons GR	6.38	2.08	5.81	2.12
Berne BE	6.39	2.13	5.80	2.25
Argovia AG	6.44	2.05	5.76	2.17
Schwyz SZ	6.45	1.99	6.05	2.09
Zurich ZH	6.48	2.07	5.94	2.35
Lucerne LU	6.50	2.00	5.91	2.22
Appenzell Outer-Rhodes AR	6.52	2.14	6.68	2.19
Obwalden OW	6.55	1.96	5.83	2.42
Nidwalden NW	6.84	2.04	6.05	2.27
Appenzell Inner-Rhodes AI	6.84	1.83	5.67	2.08

Note: The table presents canton-level means and standard deviations of generalized trust on the original 0–10 scale among Swiss-national non-movers. The first two columns pool valid person-wave responses over 2002–2018; the last two use valid responses from 2002 only. Swiss-national non-movers are respondents whose first nationality is recorded as Swiss and who make no observed inter-cantonal moves during 2002–2018. The Pearson correlation between the canton means for 2002–2018 and 2002 is 0.88.

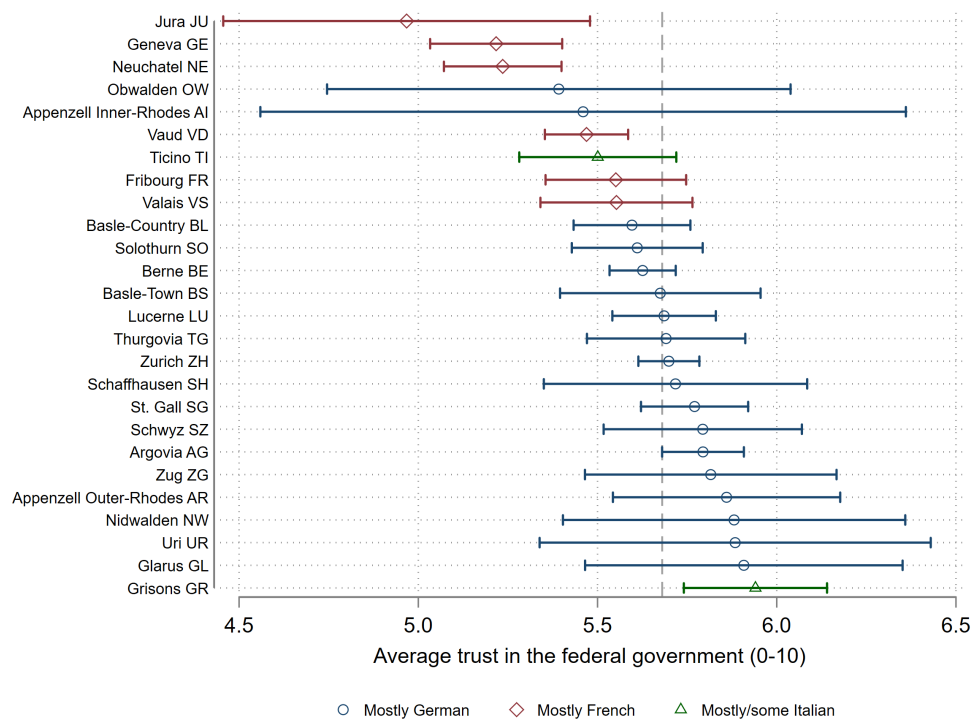


Figure OA.14 : Trust in the federal government in the cantons

Note: The figure presents average trust in the federal government among Swiss-national non-movers in each canton, calculated by pooling valid responses over 2002–2018. Individual responses range from 0 to 10. The spikes show 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered at the individual level. The vertical dashed line shows the median of the 26 canton means. Blue circles refer to mostly German-speaking cantons, red diamonds to mostly French-speaking cantons, and green triangles to cantons with Italian-speaking regions.

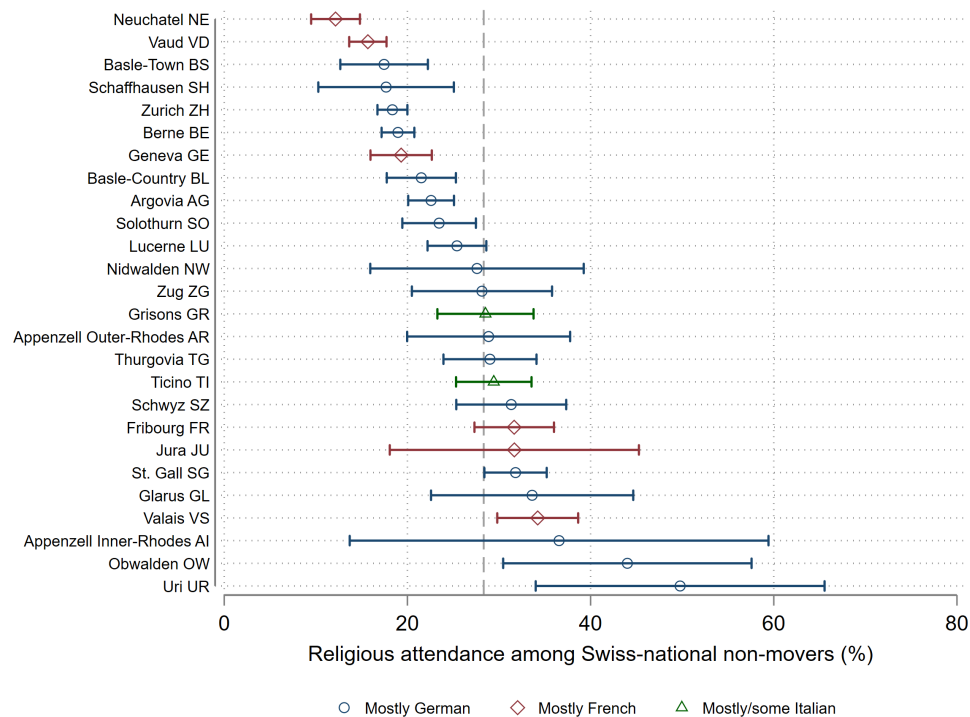


Figure OA.15 : Religious attendance in the cantons

Note: The figure presents religious attendance among Swiss-national non-movers in each canton. Canton percentages are calculated by pooling valid responses over 2002–2018 and measuring the share reporting attendance at religious services at least monthly. The spikes show 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered at the individual level. The vertical dashed line shows the median of the 26 canton percentages. Blue circles refer to mostly German-speaking cantons, red diamonds to mostly French-speaking cantons, and green triangles to cantons with Italian-speaking regions.

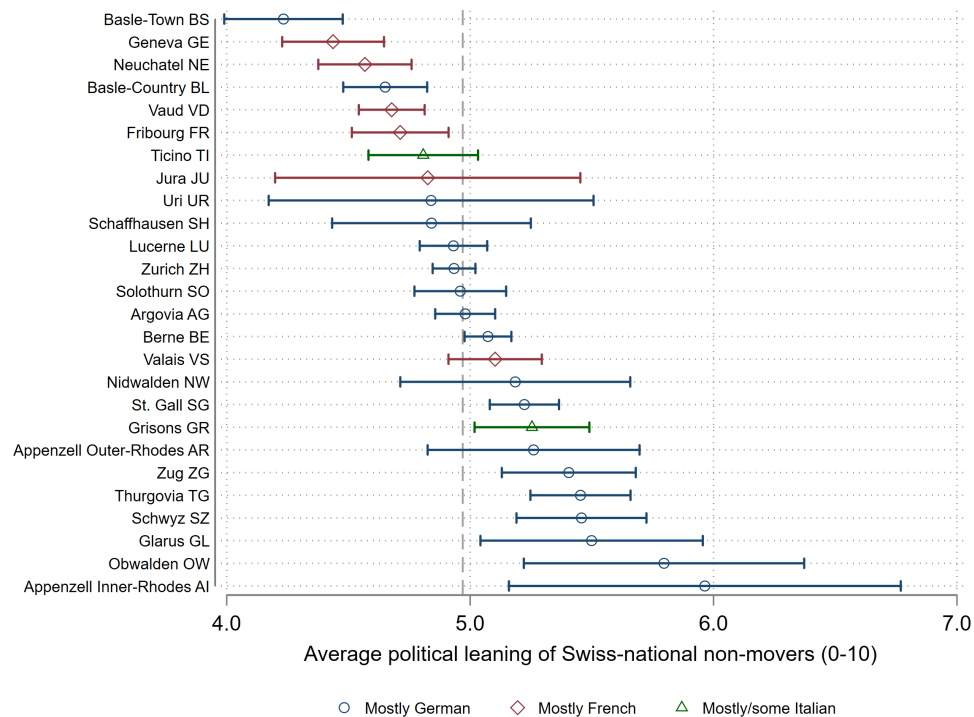


Figure OA.16 : Political leaning in the cantons

Note: The figure presents average political leaning among Swiss-national non-movers in each canton, calculated by pooling valid responses over 2002–2018. Political leaning is measured on a scale from 0 (left) to 10 (right), so higher values indicate a more right-leaning political position. The spikes show 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered at the individual level. The vertical dashed line shows the median of the 26 canton means. Blue circles refer to mostly German-speaking cantons, red diamonds to mostly French-speaking cantons, and green triangles to cantons with Italian-speaking regions.

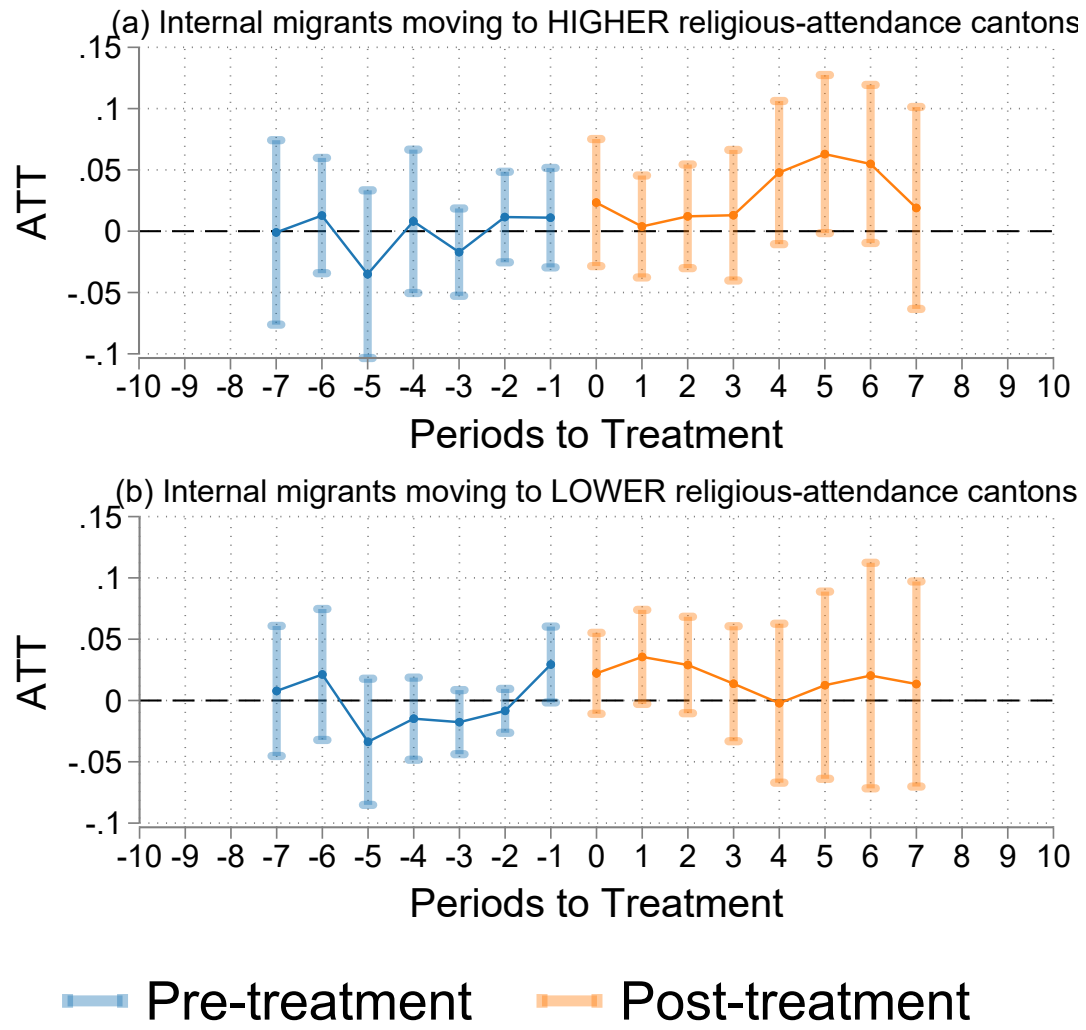


Figure OA.17 : Event-study estimates for religious attendance

Note: The figure presents event-study estimates of the effect of internal migration on religious attendance. The outcome is an indicator equal to one if the respondent attends religious services at least monthly. Panel (a) includes migrants moving to cantons with a higher share of respondents attending religious services at least monthly than their canton of origin, while panel (b) includes migrants moving to cantons with a lower share. Canton shares are calculated by pooling valid responses from Swiss-national non-movers over 2002–2018. Blue and orange markers report pre- and post-move estimates, respectively, with 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered at the individual level. The horizontal dashed line marks zero effect. Migrants who have not yet moved form the comparison group. Missing outcome observations are filled using nearest-neighbor interpolation. The sample consists of Swiss-national one-time internal migrants aged 15 or older. Panels (a) and (b) contain 403 and 386 migrants, respectively.

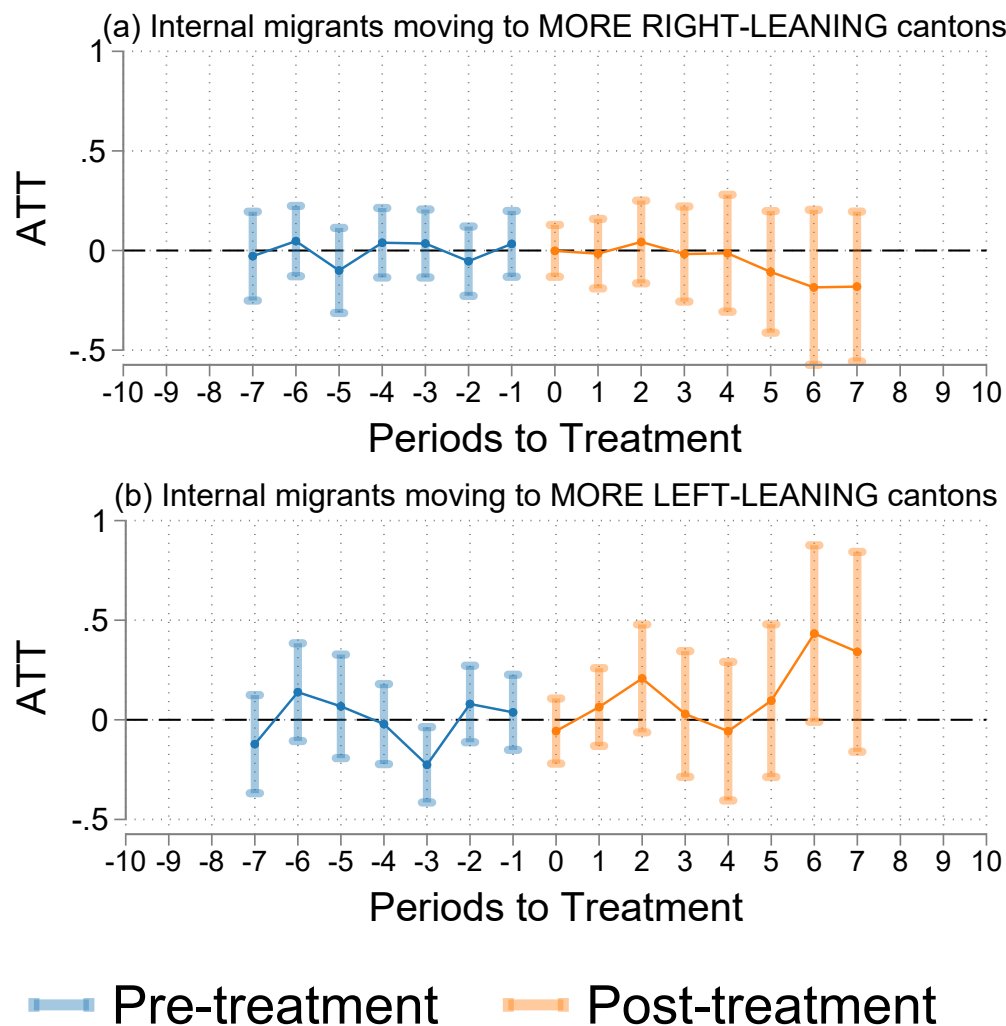


Figure OA.18 : Event-study estimates for political orientation

Note: The figure presents event-study estimates of the effect of internal migration on political orientation. Political orientation is measured on a scale from 0 (left) to 10 (right). Panel (a) includes migrants moving to cantons with a more right-leaning average political orientation than their canton of origin, while panel (b) includes migrants moving to cantons with a more left-leaning average. Canton averages are calculated by pooling valid responses from Swiss-national non-movers over 2002–2018. Blue and orange markers report pre- and post-move estimates, respectively, with 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered at the individual level. The horizontal dashed line marks zero effect. Migrants who have not yet moved form the comparison group. Missing outcome observations are filled using nearest-neighbor interpolation. The sample consists of Swiss-national one-time internal migrants aged 15 or older. Panels (a) and (b) contain 433 and 360 migrants, respectively.

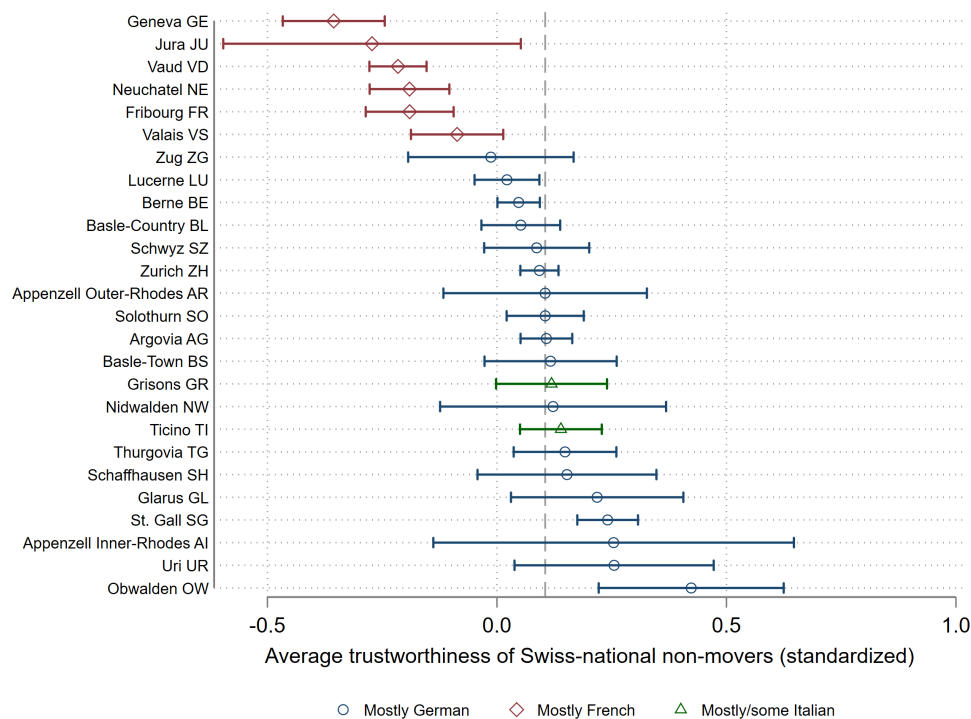


Figure OA.19 : Trustworthiness in the cantons

Note: The figure presents average trustworthiness among Swiss-national non-movers in each canton, calculated by pooling valid observations from 2011, 2014, and 2017. The spikes show 95% pointwise confidence intervals clustered at the individual level. The trustworthiness index combines six questions about the justifiability of lying in one's own interest, cheating on a tax declaration, avoiding a public-transport fare, claiming benefits without entitlement, keeping found money, and failing to report damage to a parked vehicle. The items are reverse-coded so that higher values indicate less tolerance of these behaviors and averaged for person-wave observations with valid responses to all six items. The index is standardized across valid person-wave observations in these three years before restricting the sample to Swiss-national non-movers. The vertical dashed line shows the median of the 26 canton means. Blue circles refer to mostly German-speaking cantons, red diamonds to mostly French-speaking cantons, and green triangles to cantons with Italian-speaking regions.

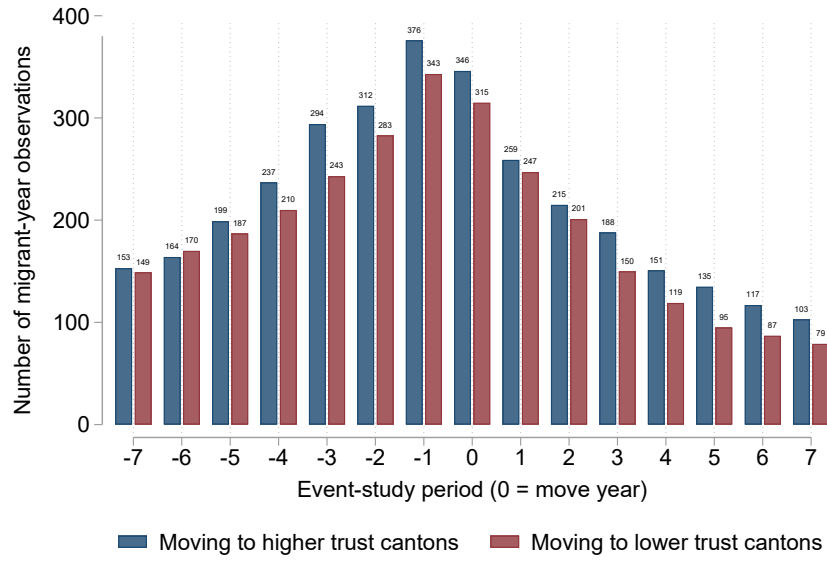


Figure OA.20 : Number of observations per event-study period

Note: The figure shows the number of migrant-year observations used in the main event-study analysis by event-study period, separately for migrants moving to higher-trust and lower-trust cantons. Event-study period 0 is the year of the move. The sample corresponds to the estimation sample from the two *csdid* regressions underlying the main event-study figure in the paper, restricted to the event window from -7 to 7.

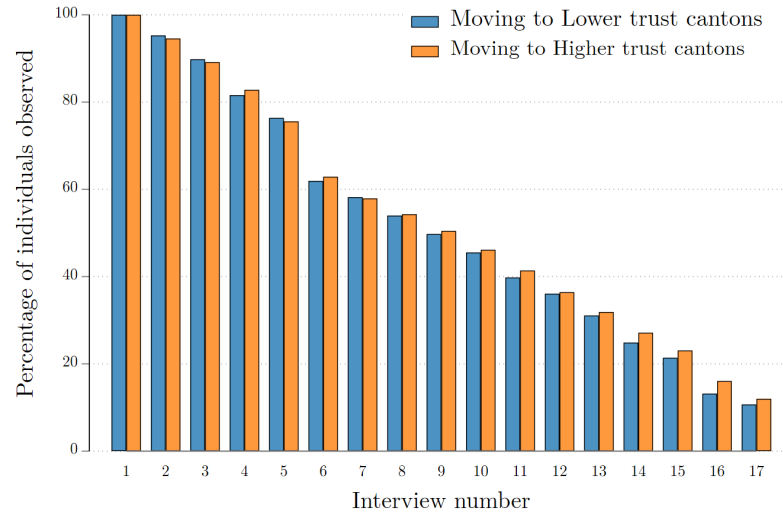


Figure OA.21 : Attrition for migrants moving to higher and lower trust cantons

Note: The figure presents the percentage of respondents observed in each interview number relative to the first interview. E.g., roughly 81% of the respondents (moving to higher and lower trust cantons) are observed at least four times, and roughly 40% are observed 11 times or more.

Table OA.15—: Canton trust and missing trust responses

	Dependent variable: Missing trust response				
	Coef.	s.e.	p-value	CI lower	CI upper
Current-canton trust	0.015	(0.137)	0.913	-0.253	0.283
Current-canton trust $\times$ Post move	-0.005	(0.145)	0.973	-0.289	0.279
Post move	-0.108	(0.019)	< 0.001	-0.146	-0.070
Destination-canton trust (main + interaction)	0.010	(0.131)	0.939	-0.247	0.267
Individual fixed effects	Yes				
Interview-year fixed effects	Yes				
Interview-number fixed effects	Yes				
Observations	9,564				
Migrants	856				

Note: The table reports an individual fixed-effects linear probability model. The dependent variable equals one when a migrant does not provide a valid trust response in a potential survey year and zero otherwise. Missing responses include absence from the panel and missing trust answers within available records. The sample contains 9,564 person-year observations from 856 Swiss-national one-time internal migrants aged 15 or older. Follow-up begins after the first valid trust response and continues through 2018. Current-canton trust equals origin-canton trust before migration and destination-canton trust in the migration year and afterward. Canton averages pool standardized trust responses from Swiss-national non-movers over 2002–2018. The destination-canton trust row reports the sum of the current-canton trust coefficient and its post-move interaction, measuring its association with the pre-to-post change in missing-response probability conditional on origin-canton trust. The regression includes individual, interview-year, and interview-number fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses use 999 bootstrap replications resampling individuals. Reported p-values and 95% confidence intervals use the normal approximation. Canton averages are held fixed.

Table OA.16—: Differential post-move attrition by migrant characteristics

	Lower-trust movers	Higher-trust movers
Postmove $\times$ own baseline trust	0.054 (0.025)	0.045 (0.025)
Holm p-value	[0.147]	[0.367]
Postmove $\times$ age	0.025 (0.025)	-0.072** (0.025)
Holm p-value	[1.000]	[0.022]
Postmove $\times$ female	0.021 (0.047)	-0.066 (0.048)
Holm p-value	[1.000]	[0.700]
Postmove $\times$ married	-0.117* (0.046)	-0.048 (0.049)
Holm p-value	[0.066]	[0.700]
Postmove $\times$ log personal income	-0.005 (0.027)	-0.033 (0.026)
Holm p-value	[1.000]	[0.700]
Postmove $\times$ education	-0.022 (0.023)	0.006 (0.025)
Holm p-value	[1.000]	[0.822]
Mean attrition	0.167	0.179
Observations	2,892	3,254
Individuals	306	335
Individual fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Calendar-year fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Event-period fixed effects	Yes	Yes

Notes: The table reports linear probability models of event-study attrition separately for Swiss-national one-time internal migrants moving to lower- and higher-trust cantons. The dependent variable equals one if the migrant is absent from a potential annual event-study observation and zero if present. Potential observations are restricted to event-study years -7 to +7 and to years after the migrant's first observed survey wave through 2018; the first observed survey year is omitted because response is guaranteed by construction. The regressions include individual, calendar-year, and event-period fixed effects. Baseline characteristics are measured at the last observed pre-move survey wave. Continuous baseline characteristics are standardized in the person-level migrant sample before the person-year eligibility exclusions; Female and Married are binary indicators. Standard errors, clustered by individual, are in parentheses. Holm-adjusted p-values are shown in square brackets and are computed within each column across the six migrant-characteristic interactions using the sequentially rejective procedure of Holm (1979). Significance stars are based on Holm-adjusted p-values. *, **, and *** denote significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels.

Table OA.17—: Sensitivity to selection into the continuous-treatment sample

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Unweighted	Weighted	Unweighted	Weighted
Destination-canton trust	0.494	0.523	0.506	0.544
	(0.210)	(0.219)	(0.217)	(0.227)
Pre-move log personal income and education	No	No	Yes	Yes
Change in average age	No	No	Yes	Yes
Migrants	352	352	352	352

Note: The table compares unweighted and inverse-probability-weighted estimates of the continuous-treatment specification. The dependent variable is the difference between mean post- and pre-move residualized standardized trust. All columns use the same 352 Swiss-national one-time internal migrants with complete inclusion-model covariates; 11 of the 363 migrants in the original unadjusted specification are excluded for missing covariates. The inclusion logit is estimated on 442 known movers with complete covariates and sufficient potential panel follow-up to meet the requirement of at least three panel observations before and after moving. Predictors are each migrant's last available pre-move trust, age, gender, marital status, log personal income, and education, together with origin- and destination-canton trust and migration year. Pre-move trust in the inclusion model is not interpolated. Canton averages are calculated using Swiss-national non-movers. Weights equal the inverse predicted probability of inclusion in the estimation sample. Columns (3) and (4) also control for last pre-move log personal income and education and the change in average age. Standard errors in parentheses use 999 bootstrap replications resampling all 442 candidate migrants and re-estimating the inclusion models and outcome regressions. Residualized outcomes and canton averages are held fixed.

*

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